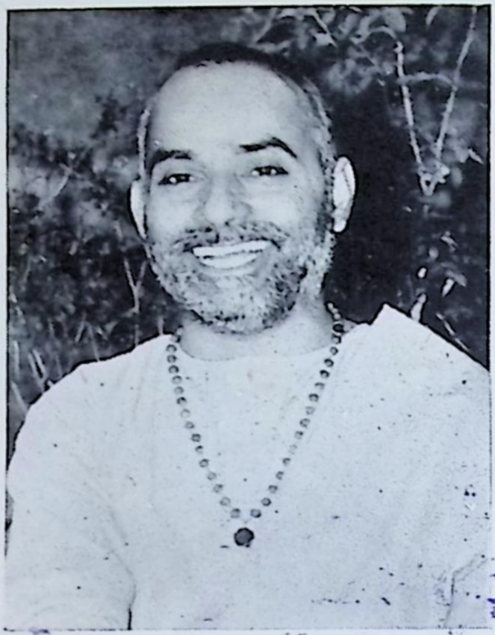
STITA-PRAJNATA
OR
STABLE-MINDEDNESS

SWAMI BHOOMANANDA TIRTHA



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'Yoga' and 'Jnana' have become the cherished indulgence of many modern men and women the world over. Held as mystic and complex, the tenets commonly presented have made their practice hard and attainment elusive. Could the ancient thinkers of the land, famous for their precision, have introduced such vagueness into these fundamental and absolute thoughts?

The Swami, heard and followed by several ardent students and seekers in many parts of the world, discusses the subjects lucidly, with his characteristic persuasion and depth. He reveals, without ambiguity, the hidden meaning of Yoga and the earthly worth of its pursuit. Before his skill at elimination and revelation, the themes lose their complexity to become lively and illumining. The sceptic reader suddenly finds the much needed clarity and assurance. A world of enrichment is briefly the sure benefit to one and all, who read him.

This book, intended to be a reproduction of the Swami's speech to a select group of intellectuals in New Delhi, poses readily before any type of reader with a resolve to take him to clarity of thought and awakening to the Self.

भारतीय विद्या भवन पुस्तकालय
प्राप्त ....
दिनांक ....
संख्या ....
दिल्ली केन्द्र

Stita-Prajnata
OR
Stable-Mindedness

BVB Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
263

SWAMI BHOOMANANDA TIRTHA

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NOTE TO READERS

In the year 1977, Swamiji addressed an audience in Dr. Tuhin and Smt. Silva Roy's house, for five mornings consecutively, on the *Stita-prajna* of the Gita. The talks made very deep impression on the listeners, some of whom desired to get a printed copy of the contents. Later, Sri Sarma and Silva Roy worked hard to put the speech, from the recorded tapes, in writing. We are grateful to Sarma and Silva for their dedication.

The *Yajna* in New Delhi, advanced suddenly by three weeks, made the task of getting the book ready in time immensely difficult, for Swamiji had to leave the Asram earlier than planned. Despite several odds, the workers of Vijaya Kerala Press co-operated greatly to release the book now.

Coming from Swamiji's hands, dealing with such a profound theme, we are sure the book will go to illumine novices as well as advanced seekers.

To simplify and facilitate reading, we have spelt *STTHITHA PRAJNA* as '*stita-prajna*'. The readers may get, if necessary, the correct pronunciation from the Sanskrit word itself—"स्थित प्रज्ञ".

Like the few other items of service we do, this is also one, for the fate which brings we owe ourselves, on your behalf too, to the Almighty, the Indweller of every one's heart.

Hari om Tat Sat.

9-10—1980

—NARAYANASRAMA THAPOVANAM

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FIRST DAY'S TALK

Why seek stita-prajnata

Hari om Tat Sat. I don't know what prompted you some of the seekers here, to decide upon this subject for a short session like this, in the mornings. Along with the other discourses we have had this year, this series on the *stita-prajna* becomes very significant. It shows how earnest, studious and discriminating the *sadhakas* around me are!

Whenever I think of the *stita-prajna* discussion of the Bhagavad Gita, the thought of Mahatma Gandhi also comes in. I felt like telling you this, for this country owes a great deal to the life and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji was perhaps recognized during his life-time mainly for his political thoughts.and philosophy. But the truth is that Gandhiji was a spiritual seeker, more than anything else. His political activities, if at all, were an external expression of what he was spiritually. His entire political strength and purpose were derived from spiritual thoughts and ideals.

In shaping his spiritual thinking and values, Bhagavad Gita played a singular role. In the Gita itself, Gandhiji was specially driven to the concept and ideal of the *stita-prajna*. This singular aspect of his life goes often unnoticed by many of his followers while they think of what the Mahatma stood for and what he still represents to the nation and its destiny.

Generally the word *Mahatma* fits in when you want to describe a great and wise person. Again, in this country, when we use the words 'great and wise', we do not imply the scholarly or the research-oriented thinker. The greatness we refer to is always traced to the religious and philosophical dedication, and the merits which it has gained for the individual and the society around him. In other words, only the spiritually great or the morally unique individuals are spoken of as *Mahatmas* (magnificent souls)!

You may have many things to speak for and perhaps a few against Mahatma Gandhi, when we discuss his political thoughts and contributions. That apart, the fact remains that Gandhiji, as an individual, as a person given supremely to the ideal of 'wholesome dedication', was unique and exemplary in many ways. This certainly points to something which constantly inspired his mind and intelligence, shaping his thoughts and guiding his actions every time. The greatness of his was the direct outcome brought by this singular factor, the spiritual source within him. I shall explain the point a little further.

Think of any one; be he an economist, a mathematician, a man of medicine, a politician or a distinguished scientist. Every one is first and last a human, an individual too. In spite of whatever is one's profession or pursuit, the role he is identified with by the society, he carries his *human* individuality everywhere and at all times. The individualness, or say the humanhood – that complexity of livingness – is a factor common to all persons.

This complex humanhood is what we want to consider in detail, probe into, in order to understand the *stita–prajna*, the subject we have taken up for discussion here. Why? Within the human personality, which is complex as we have said, are a set of potential sentient resources. A proper study of these, and then a right and orderly utilization of them all, will alone enable the thinking human to attain success in life and be effective in whatever pursuit he takes up from time to time.

Let us take the case of a scientist doing his research. What are the first things available to him in pursuing his work? His field of search may be anything—matter, energy, physics, chemistry, astronomy or the like. In order to proceed with the work, he has to be using his individual personality, of which the body is but a visible aggregate. Within this visible body are the invisible potent resources : a mind capable of feeling, generating thoughts and emotions; then an intelligence which has the power to enquire into, reason and determine; further the heart, which relates and supports the two (mind and intelligence). All these together make his 'scientific' personality. This is the one he employs constantly to do his research, with the help, if necessary, of the other external aids. All the success and excellence he achieves in his work is really the creation of his own subjective resources.

Now, this personality, individual in nature, but common to all alike, is the thing we want to touch up and orient in order to become the *stita-prajna*. We must impart to it the *stita-prajna* quality and status. The keenness with which you are able to do this is the factor which will determine the effectiveness of whatever you do objectively, in your field of activity. The divergence in our fields of operation does not in any way affect our common need for this subjective orientation. The quality-building in the sphere of the mind and intelligence is the first task to be done, if you rightly understand the pursuit. That when well done, will alone shine all your activities and pursuits, wherever they may be.

Gandhiji, it is said, had gained his insight and strength mainly from two sources. One was the story of *Harischandra.* Harischandra's was a life of Truthfulness—truthfulness pursued steadfastly, though assailed and tried variously from several quarters. Nevertheless, the great king persisted, upholding whatever he stood for. And at last the trials ceased, vindicating himself and his pursuit gloriously. There can be no life more trying than the ancient Harischandra's. None can hope to be more committed to a life of truthfulness than he was.

It appears Gandhiji drew ample inspiration from Harischandra's life of wholesome dedication. His resolve to be truthful was apparently a sequel to it.

Bhagavad Gita was a constant companion of the Mahatma. He made Gita a 'living' friend and guide for him. Normally, I don't like to illustrate the spiritual truths and expositions citing political persons for the purpose. My discussion about Mahatma Gandhi is not on the basis of what he did and meant politically. It is from the point of view of what made Gandhiji a Mahatma. The *stita-prajna* ideal he imbibed and constantly strove to practise and perfect is the secret of Gandhiji's greatness.

Well, this *stita-prajnata* (stable-mindedness), everyone of us badly requires for conducting our life in the world. Whatever are your fields of activity, of profession or pursuit, all of you will always need to have the qualities of the *stita-prajna*. In spite of one's objective knowledge and efficiency, every one surely has the need to orient himself subjectively after the *stita-prajna.*

Now, what is meant by *stita-prajna*? The word *prajna* is qualified by the prefix *stita*. *Prajna*, a Sanskrit word, means *consciousness* or awareness. And *stita* means stable or steady, settled or composed. Let us try to probe further the significance of these words.

Man's consciousness complex

Man, in particular, has got a complex consciousness. His consciousness is unlike that of animals. It is extremely subtle and complicated. Have you not heard of *split* personality—of persons whose personality gets *split* for some peculiar reason? I was once told by a doctor that there was a woman, somewhere in the West, who carried eight personalities in her! Is not then the consciousness of the human quite complex, complicated?

The normal consciousness, complex of course, of man goes by the name *prajna*. By consciousness, *prajna*, we mean that factor or constituent by virtue of which man carries knowledge and experience with him; he fosters emotions and indulges in them variously, to get rewarded and enriched every time. In other words, Consciousness is that presence or power by which you are able to *become conscious of*. To make man or woman conscious and also conscious of— this is the function of Consciousness.

Certainly, this factor called Consciousness, is something different from the so-called material body. Consciousness being present seperately, is the body's presence felt. Our body is not conscious of anything all by itself. It has to be made *conscious of* by another factor, a non-body presence. How ?

I see this book. Do you think the book makes me conscious of it all by itself ? The book remains just a piece of existence, as an object. May be the book is a thing in itself, by itself. I don't deny it. But in *my knowing* the book, in my recognising the presence of the book, in my observing it, the book cannot make me aware of it all by itself. Something in me will have to make me aware of the book. That is why I say, I see the book, I know the book. I don't say the book makes me see itself' do I?

So something in me, other than the eyes, makes me conscious of that objective piece of existence called the book. In the same way, that something makes me conscious of the presence of my body. Just as I say I am aware of the book, I also say I am aware of my mind and its condition, its problems. 'My mind is now afflicted... I had a bereavement... My mind is agitated... my mind is happy'. So the happiness of the mind or the miserable condition of it, the agitation it produces—all these are equally made conscious of by the same entity that made me conscious of the body or the book. Sometimes this 'I' gets split. That is what the psychologists call a 'split' personality. Whatever it may be, I said 'split personality' only to show that the human consciousness is unlike the consciousness of animals, birds, reptiles and the rest; it is extremely complex and rarified.

This complex consciousness of man, if it can be made *stita*—stable, steady, composed, firm, unshakeable, unfailing—then he becomes a *stita-prajna*. So the entire effort in understanding the *stita-prajna*, in practising *stita-prajnata*, is to make our complex consciousness stable, steady, firm and unshakeable.

Now the question arises; is it normally stable? Certainly not. It is unstable. Is it firm? No; this is the one attainment or feature we rarely find. How many people are bold and honest enough to say 'I have a very firm mind'? There are persons who can easily say 'my intelligence is very sharp'; but that is all. So a keen intelligence many possess; but when it comes to the question of a firm and stable mind, I don't think many have it. We have the best illustration for this in Arjuna himself, the heroic fighter of the Mahabharata War.

Matchless valour disproved

Of the many things to be conquered in the world, sleep is the hardest, most difficult. There are many people to conquer several other things in their lives. You can conquer your hunger—go without food and even drink. But when it is a question of setting aside sleep for a long period, every one is a failure. Sleep does not wait for you to possess it. It possesses you, grips you, unawares from within, and that is how you *fall asleep*. Does sleep any time look to your permission?

Arjuna was one who had conquered his sleep! He did intense penance, day and night alike, for months together. Can you imagine how much of heroism, of mind-control, will and endurance, he must have had in order to remain standing all along and yet not falling asleep? Possessing so much of firmness, steadiness and control, he crumbled in the actual battlefield! What happened to his will, when the very purpose for which he did his austerity, forgoing sleep, was to be accomplished, and the Kurukshetra battlefield stood vibrant to fulfil his valour?

Mahabharata says: Arjuna came to the battlefield, with full preparation. He stood facing his grandfather and preceptor, Bhishma and Drona, along with several others of his kith and kin. The moment he looked at them, his spirits began to sink, enfeebling him at all levels. In his own words, Arjuna describes the plight :

सींदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति।
वेपथुश्च शरींरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते॥

— Ch. I, V. 29

What a valorous fighter was he! How many wars had he fought? Was he not the single victor in them all? A man of such dazzling merits, standing in his chariot, was just surveying the army! The actual fight had not started yet. He hadn't bent his bow or pulled the string. At the mere survey of the enemy, he got unnerved:

'My nerves are tense; my body trembles.
My mouth is going dry, and
My hairs are standing on their end.'

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात् त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः॥

"*Gandiva*, my bow, slips from my hold, teasing me, saying 'hold me if you can'. What more?"

"My skin is burning all through.
I am not able to stand erect."

These are the bodily symptoms which gripped Arjuna suddenly. When the body gets weak, the mind is the only factor left inside, which should come to help. What is its plight? "It goes on reeling fast", says Arjuna.

Can he look to the intelligence to restore the mind to its lost strength? He says: "the intelligence rises up to say, 'no Arjuna, this will not be all right. Yours is the wrong step. Don't go in for it. I am in favour of your mind and its reluctance. This war is not to be fought at all. See, evil omens are coming up one after another'."

So Arjuna is left with no friend, no redeemer, at all. He is unable to trace any source of strength in him—his body trembling, mind reeling and intelligence arguing against. The heroic fighter was thus all of a sudden reduced to nothing, in terms of his body, his mind and his intelligence, in terms of the strength bestowed by all these together as a corporate unit.

If the valorous fighter could not say 'I am firm-minded, I am stable-minded', then do you think any of us will be able to? May be, we have sharp intelligence and keen observation, and with these we can practically do anything—search, research and explore. But with all this, the complex consciousness of man will not remain steady, composed, stable, unshakeable. The kind of mental composure we are speaking about, I don't think many can claim. I haven't found any one who said 'I have it'. It is an attainment to be cultivated with diligence.

The immortal call

इह चेदवदीत् अथ सत्यमस्ति
न चेदिहावेदीत् महती विनष्टिः।

— Kenopanishad

The *stita-prajna* thought and culture tell us that every man and woman, by nature has got a consciousness, which, normally, is far from being steady and composed. The consciousness of the ordinary man rather thrives on instability. Firmness is not its trait, tradition, heredity. By their day-to-day thoughts and actions, all people are making their consiousness more and more unsteady. If you want to make it firm, then a distinct effort and pursuit will be necessary. In fact, it needs the *stita-prajna* wisdom and *sadhana* to make anybody's consciousness well-resolved, steady and composed. 'If you are able to accomplish this culture, contain it in ample measure, then alone, my dear man, will your life be safe', says the Upanishad. Otherwise, what?

> If you succeed in realizing this (the supreme truth), in advance, your life will be meaningful. If you fail in realizing it, great indeed will be the loss you incur. You may have seeming progress in life, but it will be a progress in failure, through it and towards it.

The First Admonition

So this is the call and relevance of the *stita-prajna* culture and attainment. The *stita-prajna* generally comes up as part of the message of Gita, though its roots lie in the Upanishads.

This is a small book consisting of seven hundred - odd verses. It records a dialogue which took place between Sri Krishna and Arjuna in the Kurukshetra battlefield. Arjuna, as I mentioned, crumbled at a very inopportune moment. He became a pauper mentally, emotionally a bankrupt. In terms of inner steadiness and composure, he was standing far below zero, the freezing point. It was then that Sri Krishna began to speak to him : "Arjuna, this is not the way for you. Certainly, in this land, a number of warriors like you have fought, sometimes even worse battles. Do you mean to say you are the first one to face a war like this? How foolish of you to plead in this manner before me?"

Our land is such that its people have excelled in the culture of fighting. You know how much of internal warfare has taken place, from times immemmorial, in India. We were never politically one country, as we are now. There were a number of small and big kingdoms in this land. Fighting was the pleasure of many rulers, as hunting is with many people even now. I have not seen hunting; I have only heard about it. Some find pleasure in hunting, in killing animals. Similarly several of the kings revelled in killing. So a great deal of warfare took place every time. The urge to fight is steeped in the nature of the fighter. In fighting, he finds his life's achievement, excellence and fruition.

It is Balarama, I think, who once told Krishna, his brother, about the cruel nature of *kshatriya dharma*, the code of conduct for the fighter :

क्षत्रियाणामयं धर्मः प्रजापतिविनिर्मितः ।
भ्रातापि भ्रातरं हन्यात् येन घोरतरस्ततः ॥

> The code, evisaged by the Seers for the *Kshatriyas* is cruel indeed. For it enjoins on one to fight and kill his own brother, if need be, mercilessly. By that it becomes even more wicked.

"Arjuna, how dare you weep like this ? Why suddenly you lack composure and courage ?" Sri Krishna continued.

"Composure and stability can certainly be had and retained. We are adepts in the tradition of preserving the mind's stability. The stability of mind we gain will be so deep, so vast, so profound that not only will it sustain you now—in this pre-war situation—but also when anything and everything adverse faces you in life, after the war. It is an all-proof stability, great and deep in every way. I do know, Arjuna, the art and science of gaining it.

"Just as the science of battle was evolved by our people, they had also evolved the culture of steadying, stabilizing the mind. May be in your over–enthusiasm to fight and win this war, you overlooked the other more important battle—the battle with your mind, its emotions; the fight in oneself, with oneself.

"You were anxious to fight the external wars, and were equipping yourself more and more to this end. The external enemies and situations alone looked significant for you. But internally there exists a crisis in you, in everyone. It is the crisis of emotions, the crisis caused by the mind and intellect, due to which they lack stability and begin to swing and swerve unduly. You did not recognize during the past long years this crisis in you, or you chose to neglect it.

"Know it from me, Arjuna, that there is a way to deal with this inner crisis, which generates fear, weakness and doubt. You can, like any other, fight it out and gain victory. I shall, if you seek, initiate you into this art, this culture, this self–fight and self-victory."

The entire Gita gospel proceeded from this background, the discomfiture Arjuna had right in the middle of the battle-field, before the actual war began. The call to become a *stita-prajna* was the solution which Sri Krishna held before Arjuna at that time. After Arjuna listened to what Krishna said, discussed, argued and clarified, his confusion disappeared and clarity dawned in him. In Arjuna's own words : "My confusion has fled; instability vaporised. I stand again stable, composed and ready to fight, not alone one Bhishma and one Drona, but the whole of the Kuru army; to fight anyone, my dear Krishna, including you if need be." These were the benefits he gained on hearing the *stita-prajna* philosophy, which Krishna taught him to remove his misery and weakness.

A devotee who put out his eyes

A story suddenly comes to my mind in connection with what I said about Arjuna : "I am prepared to fight any one, including yourself, dear Krishna."

Once lived in the South a devotee of Lord Krishna. He was very strong in morals, but all his moral sense failed utterly when it came to a question of his attraction for the opposite sex. His weakness assailed him wherever he went, and he was unable to extricate himself. Ultimately, he had his disillusionment in the hands of his own lady-lover, who one day remarked: 'How better would have been your fate, if you loved Lord Krishna the way you love me, this body. How rewarding would your love be then?' The words drove him instantly to the zenith of dispassion. Taking to renunciation, he was moving about freely as a mendicant, away from family and home. After years passed, one day it so happened that his instincts, remaining suppressed, suddenly burst forth.

You know, whatever lies in the mind strongly, can never be eliminated by an act of suppression. If you try to keep it down, where will it remain? Is the mind like a vessel, which you can fill and seal?

Think of the radioactive waste from the nuclear reactors of the world. We are told it is being packed in very strong barrels and dumped into the sea. The scientists and observers say that even by this we are not safe. However thick these barrels are, whatever be the material they are made of, salinity will act on them, and the wear and tear caused will result in some kind of leakage. What will happen finally then? We are unable to predict!

If this is the truth about the radioactive waste—a thing material, external and visible, what to speak of the propensities of the invisible internal mind, something supramaterial? Where in the mind will you put your emotion into—in the bottom, in a corner or somewhere in the middle? The exact place and nature of the mind are not known. What then of keeping something in it by force?

Still, the habit of suppression is current with many people. They manage to seal their feelings or emotions down within the body, in the mind. May be, for ten years you remain suppressing, suppressed. In the eleventh year, suddenly, with or without any reason, the sealed content bursts out like a volcano, and you get caught in the eruption. This is what happens with those given to undue controls and suppressions. The right way for treating the mind's emotions, or the body's urges is different.

This mendicant devotee, after several years had passed, one day was caught suddenly by the emotion he had suppressed all along. Like sleep, which grips you, drawing your mind and attention inward, emotion too overpowers you from inside and pushes your mind outward. The difference between the two is that sleep *pulls* one *inwards*, while emotion *pushes* him *outwards*.

A woman of good looks happened to pass by. The mendicant saw her, and lo, instantly he lost all control over himself. That which he had suppressed so long, burst forth in a flash. Unable to restrain himself, he followed her. The lady, unaware of what was happening behind her, walked on and on to reach her destination. Reaching her house, she went inside and disappeared. The young man, who had followed her, went up to the verandah of the house, where a man was standing. Looking at him, calling his attention, the intruder said: "Where has the woman gone? I want to see her once again. Will you, sir, call her back here?" The man, not feeling the least strange, thought to himself: 'What is the harm in calling her to the verandah? Let this stranger see her once again, as he wishes.' He went in and told his wife: "A stranger, standing outside, wants to see you once again, he says. Come to the verandah; let him see you ."

The mind of every one carries with it a variety of impulses, a host of forces and counter-forces. As I mentioned earlier, the human consciousness is complex in all ways. Its complexity is amazing. Hearing the man speak to the lady, the stranger blushed. His mind, suddenly brought forth a new note. "What a nonsense! What did I say, and what am I up to now? Ah, shame!" Disillusioned, he took a thorn from the large lemon tree standing on the lawn there and pierced both his eyes. "Because of your vision, was I driven to this plight! Let me put you out for ever, that I may not meet such a distress any more." From that moment onwards, the mendicant was blind till his body fell lifeless.

External vision put out, his inner vision grew brighter and deeper every day. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna. Making Krishna his close friend, he used to have all kinds of romantic exchange and interaction with Him, as with one alive and standing in front. His blindness added a new scope and vigour to this friendship. He needed Krishna's assistance all the more and very frequently.

It appears a boy came every day to keep company and give whatever service the blind man asked for. He used to bring food, give water, and help him go wherever he wanted. The friendship and dependence between them grew deeper and deeper. The blind old man began to be more free and relying on the young associate.

One day, in a voice sunk in emotion, he told the boy after meals : "My dear lad, I have for long cherished a desire to go to Vrindawan. Being blind, how can I ever? Will you, my dear son, take me to Vrindawan and fulfil my life's ambition? Let me at least reach the spot, where lived my Great Lord. Once my feet are there, I shall lie and roll my body in the dust of the place. In that way, though unable to see the things sanctified by the Lord's sports, I shall satisfy my heart's thirst. I beg of you to help me for the purpose. Will you not take me to Vrindawan? Pray, give me your word...."

The boy, unable to be seen by the old man, took his hands on his, and shaking them with fondness, said unmistakeably : "Yes, my dear Sir, I shall take you to Vrindawan. Do not feel sad. It is a long way off. Yet, holding your hand, I shall take you gently to the land you so much love. Feel assured. Be ready tomorrow. We shall leave at eight in the morning." Stroking the old man's body very affectionately, the boy went home, as usual.

He returned promptly in time the next day. Telling the devotee "Yes, here have I come. Hold on to my hand, and walk with confidence. We shall be in Vrindawan before long." The blind man held the young boy's hand, as directed. And both of them moved forward. The seeing boy in front and the blind one at the back, the couple went on and on, knowing neither fatigue nor hunger and thirst.

My dear souls, this is how we should get coupled with God, and be led by Him. Our pity is that we struggle hard to see more than we should, and by that make the Lord blind before us. 'I know enough about me and my problem. I am true to my concern. How can the Lord be so attentive as I am personally? Does He have a body of blood, as have I?'

The trend of our thoughts is quite strange. 'How can the Invisible God know what are my affairs, and what solutions and help my family members and I need from time to time ? ... Does He know, without my telling Him that my daughter is ill and that my wife is pregnant. The doctors have diagnosed complications. ... Let me, therefore, go to the Temple, remind the Lord there, pleasing Him with offers. I shall give Him my petition. Of course, it is always a one-way affair, and I cannot know whether the Lord has received it and what will be His response. ... So, I have to make sure of my position.

'Let me then go to the other Temple also and beg of that Lord for His favour as well. If the former refuses, at least the latter will not, I trust. Or may be one of them is asleep when I pray. In that case, the other will be awake'. ...

Neither courage nor faith is there to keep us confident. We shape our thoughts in fantastic ways, to cover our delusion and fear. All that we do and say in the name of seeking God's favour is steeped in the weakness and restlessness of our own hearts and minds. That is how, I said, we are over-seeing ourselves, so much so that we make the Lord blind in the process.

We should actually make God all-seeing, and prefer ourselves to be blind before Him. Then alone will He come to our rescue, help and guidance, whenever we need, without our having to ask him to.

The boy, therefore, led the blind old man and the devotee followed him gently. On arriving at the destination, he said in a mischievous tone : "Here, Sir, has come Vrindawan, the place you wanted to reach. My mission is now complete, and so here I go. Be relieved at heart ..." These words hardly completed, the boy higgled out of the blind man's grip. While he was slipping out, the old man felt something very tender and sweet in his touch, and therefore, tried hard to stop him, by holding faster. 'What am I so sinful to be deluded like this ? Is not he the Lord of my heart, the sweet Krishna, the delighter of my spirits ? I wanted to reach Krishna's spot, and here now have I come at last, only to lose Him, His touch, pitiably ! Alas ! ... ' But by then the guide had left.

God's Powerlessness

In utter agony, the blind devotee uttered loudly a note of assurance :

हस्तमुत्क्षिप्य यातोऽसि बलात्कृष्णं किमद्भुतम् ।
हृदयाद्यदि निर्यासि पौरुषं गणयामि ते ॥

Hastam-utkshipya yaatosi balaat Krishnam kim adbhutam
Hridayaat yadi niryaasi paurusham ganayaami te

> Pushing away my hands, you are now going your way, O Krishna, forcefully! What show of strength is there in this ? I shall consider that alone great and powerful, if you are able to flee from my heart.

"My dear Krishna, what fun or glory or valour is there in your doing this? I, a blind old man, holding to your small hand with my weak one, you are throwing aside ! I didn't know whose hand I held. You said 'here is my hand', and then I held it in mine. I was loyal, faithful, accepting what you said. The same person now says 'here I go, leave me', refusing to give me his help any longer. Can this be any valour? A 'seeing' young boy, fighting out a 'blind' old man ! I ask you, with all my faith and strength : Get away from my heart. If you can escape from my inmost being, then indeed will I say you are strong, powerful, and yours is a true feat......"

This is the right attitude one must have with the Creator, Almighty. With God, you must be free, frank, wholesome, in your approach and faith. The trouble with mankind is the lack of proper and timely thinking.

There are two ways of seeking a relationship with God. In one, you assume everything to have been born of Nature. If all things belong to Nature, then all the capacities, conquests and complexities we find and have, are also evolved by the same Nature. Understand Nature, its wholesomeness, and do not attribute anything to yourself or to another. Let all belong to Nature, and let this thought, this understanding, keep away the sense of ownership or identification from you. Say and feel 'I am Nature's; everything in me belongs to Nature; nothing can therefore be mine.'

Either do this, or foster the thoughts of devotion and devotional reliance, surrender: The entire created world is born out of the Creator. Identify everything with the Creator, and maintain an attitude of surrender and dedication. Infuse into His Being, offer unto Him, the passion you have, the jealousy and prejudice you find in you. Fight them out, but by this pious thought and attitude. You know that these traits are in you, and you want to get rid of them. The way you adopt for removing them is identifying them with God, and offering them to Him. The devotional thoughts must be surcharged with this kind of surrender and sacrifice.

This is how Arjuna came to tell Krishna, after listening to the *stita-prajna* gospel: "All my doubts have been removed. I am resolved now. I shall fight any one, including yourself, O Krishna......". It was Arjuna's attitude of wholesomeness, from which we have to learn a great deal. That is why I discussed the story here.

Aryatwa Questioned and Explained

Sri Krishna's admonition was quite suggestive : "Some at least of the fighters must have met a crisis like yours, Arjuna, some time in their life-time. And they must also have withstood it, with wisdom and determination. Why say further? I have my history of fight with my own relations and elders. That meant a moral and spiritual fight within me, before the actual war took place. I did have my victory in it.

"Even in this War, which vexes you, Arjuna, I am as much a participant, a partner, as you are. In driving the chariot, I am standing by your side, supporting your acts. How much more perplexed should I be then? But am I? Look at my face, and judge how my mind is. There is, Arjuna, something graceful, redeeming in me, which keeps my mind composed, unperplexed, quite unlike yours. I shall disclose to you the secret about it. I shall tell you all about me, my attainment; the wisdom and experience I have gained, enabling me to be what I am now." Krishna was initiating Arjuna to the great spiritual lessons, to the clues about the lofty *stita-prajnata*, the zenith of spiritual vision and attainment.

Let me tell you something about the context in which the *stita-prajna* discussion becomes relevant:

Gita being a spiritual dialogue, Sri Krishna discusses everything in a spiritual manner, but not initially. His initial words radiate emotion, also instil intellectual responses. Seeing Arjuna totally unnerved by what he saw in the battlefield, Krishna says: "This is unbecoming of a true *Arya*. It is improper for a graceful man, a heroic individual, to lose heart like this. It is unworthy of one like you, O Arjuna, especially at this hour."

अनार्यजुष्टं अस्वर्ग्यं अकीर्तिकरं अर्जुन।

C. 2, V. 2

Arya means *sreshta* (superior or great). Anybody who is esteemable is called an *Arya*. When Arjuna heard that it was not mannerly for an *Arya* to behave in the way he was doing, he became a little penitent. His inner eyes were beginning to open: "In spite of thirteen years of preparation, why have I got suddenly weakened now, at the sight of the Army? What is the wrong in me? Where lies the cause of my confusion? Conquering sleep or doing severe austerity, it seems, does not imply greatness and strength. What is that other gain, which I must have worked for, not to fall a victim to weakness? Is there not something distinct, by which alone will man become strong in mind, and be able to contain his emotions? What is that hidden power which conduces to real *Aryatwa*"?

"Confusion and weakness are quite normal in human life. There is a sure way to treat them and gain clarity. Instead of proceeding rightly, Arjuna, you displayed weakness and delusion. You should not have done so. . ... ". Krishna was instituting in Arjuna a patient and intelligent approach to resolve the mind's problem. His words had a personal touch of love and authority.

Finding Arjuna responsive, the level of Krishna's tuition also progressed. From emotion it first rose to intellectual heights; and from there it penetrated into the philosophical and spiritual depths :

"To have the mind confused, to have the understanding distorted, not to remain determined and resolute, is not unnatural to human beings. By the very birth as a human, men and women are bound to undergo such a plight. If one says he is not emotionally excitable, it implies he is not yet fully grown. Something is deficient in him either physiologically or psychologically. Every one must be capable of raising emotions, in the same way as he is capable of generating thoughts. To have emotional susceptibility is good. One must equally have an intellectual response and awakening too.

"To have health also means to be a possible victim to disease and ill-health. Both go together. In the same manner, only for a healthy mind, an emotional confrontation is possible. To the intelligent alone, doubts and confusion are likely, and only then he will find the need for clarity and better vision. The life in the world implies and involves all kinds of mental and intellectual challenge and persecution. None need be afraid of them at all.

"But surely there is a state devoid of confusion and weakness, in which you will feel firm, unshakeable and confident. No threat or challenge will be able to unsettle you from the harmony you have found. This state of profound depth and magnificence is called the *stita-prajna* state, the crowning phase of spiritual seeking and vision."

Indifference, the Supreme Gain

Sri Krishna gives two verses, as a prelude to the enquiry of Arjuna about *stita prajna*:

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥

C. 2, V. 52

They are verses 52 and 53 of the second chapter of Gita. For the keen student of Gita, these are supremely important.

Generally, they are not properly understood by the readers. Nor are they placed in the right place of relevance and importance. Arjuna's enquiry about the *stita-prajna* is a sequel to the content of these verses. The simple meaning will be :

> "When your intelligence crosses the quagmire of delusion—the slushy state of your mind—then alone will you be able to grow indifferent to what you have heard and what you will hear. (Verse 52).

Let me explain the import of the statement. Our mind is generally given to a variety of thoughts, ideas, emotions and ambitions. All these breed alongside a variety of doubts, fears, anxieties and concerns. Enmeshed in them, the mind does not know which way to proceed. The experiences and memories so far gained will weigh upon the mind, and the thought of those to come will also assail it. All together, it will be a state of constant vibration, vacillation, revolution, with no definiteness of purpose any time. What is the final solution and where does it lie? Every one is ignorant of it. This is what Sri Krishna implies by the quagmire of delusion, the state in which you do not know what the real and lasting values or gains are, a state of total indefiniteness. Reflections of the past and concerns for the future only tend to worsen the crisis.

When will this undecided, slippery state of the mind (quagmire of delusion) be overcome and by what ?

The intelligence, by being exposed to the nature and benefits of Yoga, will take up the pursuit earnestly. The ideas about the Immortal Soul will grow, and with that the right inspiration and guidance will emerge. With greater *viveka*, the ultimate aim of the practice and the means of realizing it, both will become very definite before it. Once the *buddhi* becomes well-resolved (*vyavasaayaatmikaa*, as Krishna put it earlier), all its delusion, confusion, distortion, indecision, doubt, etc. will fall of like dead leaves.

This state devoid of delusion is very pronounced for its expression. The sadhaka will grow utterly indifferent to what ever he has read and heard, materially as well as spiritually. The values and goal of life being clear, such indifference or disregard is natural to him.

What is left to be done by him is the actual realization of the goal, for which taking to Yoga practice more seriously is the means—not further reading or argumentation. Direct experience and realization will appeal to him more than does anything else. This is typical of his state.

Yoga when Attained

In the next verse, Krishna describes the course to follow this development. He says, how will the intelligence behave when engaged in contemplation.

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिः तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

C. 2. V. 53

> When your intelligence, given to the tuition of Scriptures and Teachers and suffering from doubt as a result, will remain unwavering, unoscillating, within your own mind (not tied to any object for introspection or rest), and it is able to persist in steadiness during the time, then indeed will you reach the state of Yoga; this is the state of *Yogaaroodha*.

Why should Krishna lay such a great stress on the intelligence and its being free of all oscillations ? After growing indifferent to the world, the spiritual seeker is engrossed only in one pursuit, that of reading the Scriptures, ruminating over what they say. He will also follow up the reading and introspection with meditation, the practice of what people generally call *samadhi*. In leading him to *samadhi*, in verifying what he experiences during the state, he is guided by the Scriptures. Again, his thoughts of the Soul are based upon what the Scriptures and Seers state.

The references in the Texts, as well as the words of Masters, by their very nature, are various, sometimes even contradictory. Naturally the seeker is affected. Where lies the Soul? How to ascertain whether the Soul is the thing met with in *samadhi*? How many kinds and orders of Soul–finding are there? Which of them is the first,and which the last? Is there any progression in finding the Self? Or is it one wholesome experience, having no part or stage in it? How can the single Soul be considered plurally by people, even Seers?... These will be the doubts and oscillations to dominate him when he tries to collect his mind, gain composure, get at the fruition, and then wake up from it to formulate his vision.

Sri Krishna refers to this kind of oscillation. The intelligence, about which is Wisdom or Realization spoken, must be totally freed from even the subtlest oscillations. It should remain absolutely steady and stable, with nothing supporting it for the purpose, but absorbed all by itself in contemplation within the body, choosing no specific place or aid to get at the absorption.

There should be no tension, no tussle, no suppression, nor any confusion. The whole development must be easy, spontaneous, and there should be full awareness too. Then indeed will the state of Yoga be attained.

Krishna qualifies *buddhi* with the word *sruti-vipratipannaa*; and this means something very significant. The last source for the intellect to be agitated or doubtful is the *Sruti*, Scripture, itself. The effects of reading and listening will alone survive and cause disturbance, if at all, in the last stage.

How many cults and systems are there in our country in the sphere of religion and spirituality? Their authors interpret the same set of Upanishads to bring out the meanings they want, to sustantiate their systems. Each system claims superiority over the rest. The *Advaita, Visishtaadvaita* and *Dwaita*, all these derive their authority from the same source. And they choose to explain the same Soul, the Supreme Reality.

Naturally a basic truth comes to the forefront. The Soul, the Reality they speak of, it seems, is shining in its own uniqueness, making those who perceive it think variously about it. The thing which they see seems then to be different from what all they say and argue about. The Soul is unique by itself. Opinions about It alone differ. The differences are brought about by those who look and begin to speak on their observation. If this be so, leave all opinions and cling to That which causes all these. Let the cause and source of all the views be known, apprehended, realized in itself, by its own light, not in the shadow cast by anything else.

Verily, this is what happens. The seeker will one day hit upon the Soul directly himself, with no doubt or confusion. Then alone is the practice of Yoga fulfilled. Sri Krishna refers to such a state of supreme realization in this verse.

Arjuna felt highly inspired. "Where is my present state of confusion", he thought, "and where reigns that supreme state of clarity and felicity ! Are both the display of the same intelligence? Can it shake me as now, and can it also remain unshakeable and absorbed then? How great, lofty and soothing will such a state of Yoga be? I must know more about it, about the stable man, for whom neither the world nor his life causes disruption. Perhaps Krishna embodies that lofty state himself." It is thus that Arjuna began to raise his questions on the *stita-prajna*? Who is a *stita-prajna*, and how does one become so, etc.? Arjuna's questions, seemingly simple, are quite profound and comprehensive. A world of spiritual wisdom is contained in the few words of his.

The Question on Stita-Prajna

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम्॥

Ch. 2, V. 54

> What, O Krishna, is the true description of the *stita-prajna*, immersed in *samadhi*? What will the *stita-dhee* talk? How is his speech distinguished? Where and how will he take his rest? How indeed will he live and move about in the world?

Bhaashaa means description. Arjuna asks Krishna to describe the nature of the *stita-prajna* seated in contemplation, *samadhi*. From the very description of the Yoga state, Arjuna could understand that in that state, one will not be able to think or talk. For, the intelligence remains fully motionless, non-vibrant. Without a vibration in the consciousness, neither word nor thought can be had. Naturally, such a state has to be described by another. "When will you say that one is immersed in the *stita-prajna* samadhi?" This is Arjuna's enquiry.

To try to contemplate is one thing; to reach the state of fruition in it is entirely different. Contemplation will derive its fruition, fulfilment, only when the *prajna*, consciousness, remains *stita*, stable and non-moving. When and by what exact process is the consciousness led to be like this? Arjuna seeks to know the basic and ultimate nature of the *stita-prajna* pursuit.

There is a marked difference between the *stita-prajna* and the *stita-dhee*, as the words themselves denote. The second word is used as the basis for the second question. The significance is evident. After being in the *stita-prajna* state for a time, the sadhaka will certainly wake up; he has to. No state can abide for ever. Like sleep, the spiritually absorbed state also must terminate—after hours, days, months or years. When one is awakened from it, he can only preserve the impression or experience he had gained during that state, for his purposes now. After experiencing *stitatwa*, stability or firmness, in *samadhi*, he now wakes up with the memory of the *stitatwa*. Like any other knowledge, the *stita-prajna* experience too becomes an active part of the intelligence, to illumine and guide him every moment.

One who is so guided and illumined must have the distinct marks in his speech. They will naturally be revealing the merits of what he has attained by Yoga. How is such speech identified, therefore, is a relevant enquiry. Unlike the *stita-prajna* state, which is speechless and motionless, the state of *stita-dhee* is speechful and active. The *stita-dhee* has a large scope to reveal himself. Arjuna wants to know how will the lustre of Yoga sparkle in the speech of the *stita-dhee*.

Now comes the question of the Knower's rest, his natural manner of repose. The ordinary man will relax on a sofa or lie on a cot, whenever he wants to rest. That is the resting of the body. Does he rest his mind too in a similar way? Has he found a place to rest the mind on? Will the mind listen to him?

The acts done earlier, those to be done later, both together will crowd his mind, causing agitation, ambition and plans. The net result is that he becomes disturbed at heart. The state of *stita-dhee* must be obviously different. "Let me know the difference clearly."

Now comes the question 'how will he move about in the world'. Arjuna knows well that the worldly activities are vexing and confusing by nature. Activity is opposed to rest. In the same way, the quiet of the *stita-prajna* will be disturbed, teased and set aside by his activity which ensues. One cannot always be immersed in the *stita-prajna* state, to avoid confrontation from *vyavahaara*, worldly activity. We seek the benefits of Yoga as a solution to the problems caused by our life and activities. Our object is not to annihilate activities and interactions altogether. If we were to attempt it, the very purpose of Yoga would be defeated.

That is why the doubt arises. Arjuna wonders: "I am a fighter now. I have come here to fight. The thoughts of War and the sight of Elders have tensed and confused my mind. Suppose I get illumination and the benefits of the *stita-prajna* state, in what way will the outcome affect me? Will I grow utterly indifferent, and feel like abandoning the War and the consequences of it?

"What about an ordinary man, a householder, not to speak of one like me? Will Yoga, its fruition, make him unconcerned about his life in the house? Will he leave the family to get immersed in contemplation, neglecting his duties and pursuits? If he does not, then by what means will he keep his composure intact, keeping the disturbances and agitations away? Surely, there must be something more to the practice of Yoga. Will the *dhee* (intelligence) remain *stita* in spite of what he does and meets in the world, from out of his life or the others'?

"Can I remain unruffled, even if I am to fight this War, and my fight brings to me all the pressure, pain and tension? In short, does the attainment have a steady character, remaining unassailable under all conditions? Only if it has, it can answer the needs of the common and worldly man.... "

Arjuna has now completed his enquiry. In answer, Sri Krishna begins to clarify all the points raised by Arjuna. As suggestive as the questions are, so significant and complete will the answers too be. We shall see more of them tomorrow.

End of the First Day's Talk.

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SECOND DAY'S TALK

Questioning and Evaluation

Arjuna sets an example both in the distress he met and the questioning he makes. His questions, precise and deep, must open the eyes of all devotees and seekers. They evoke almost a full chapter of answer from Sri Krishna. Arjuna's keenness makes him raise relevant questions throughout the Gita. You will find more of them in the later chapters.

Suppose you worship God regularly. At some time you should wonder: "What for am I worshipping? Is my worship properly done? How to make sure it does touch the Lord I offer it to? Is He pleased with me and what I do?" When you question like this, it will result in an evaluation of your worship. You will endeavour to become more sincere, and the whole approach will be more effective and uplifting.

In a later chapter, Sri Krishna himself refers to the role of questioning in the life of a seeker. "Go to the Wise Persons; approach them with humility and devotion; ask them whatever you want to know; serve them with love; and they will favour you with the right wisdom." The Truth will become known and realized only then.

To question is not anything unseemly. It is only that you should question properly, showing humility, making sure of what you seek to know. The temptation to enquire will be there only when one is sincere and he wants to progress in his path. When Arjuna was awakened to his mind's weakness and delusion, he instantly wanted to know how the defects can be removed and how he can achieve clarity and stability. He found *stita-prajna* to be the ideal and he was immediately after it.

Our devotees and worshippers should imbibe their lessons from Arjuna's way of approach. Whatever be their religious merits, however much of worship and prayer they may do, they will still need to practise *stita-prajnata*, in the same way as Arjuna did. The example of Arjuna covers a wide range of religious and philosophical facts.

Viveka, the Prime Need

There is a verse in Yogavaasishta, in which Sage Vasishta stresses that every one must cultivate *viveka* first and last.

य एव यत्नः क्रियते बाह्यार्थोपार्जने जनैः ।
स एव यत्नः कर्तव्यः पूर्वं प्रज्ञाविवर्धये ॥

Ya eva yatnah kriyate baahyarth-opaarjane janaihi
Sa eva yatnah kartavyah poorvam prajnaa-vivardhaye

> Whatever effort is made by people to acquire external objects for ensuring prosperity, a similar one should first of all be directed for improving their discrimination, *viveka*. (With discrimination rightly developed will alone shine all other gains, worldly or religious.)

A right measure of *viveka* is necessary for man to work, as well as to realise the benefits of his work. In the absence of *viveka*, he will not be able to put in the right kind of effort or make use of the benefits arising from his work. *Viveka* is as indispensable, useful, in material pursuits as in spiritual seeking. Cultivation of *viveka*, therefore, becomes the foremost factor in leading an effective human life. That is why Vasishtadev stresses it so much. In the absence of *viveka*, the fate of man will be like Arjuna's before the War.

With the eye of *viveka*, you can look at anything whatsoever properly. Here too, Sri Krishna is awakening Arjuna to the *viveka* about *stita-prajna*—what constitutes the state; how should the seeker proceed to practise it; when will the practice fulfil itself, etc.

In order to understand the *stita-prajna* state, let us think of our mind, its functions and the states they give rise to in us.

The Sleep-state Compared

We are now wakeful, sitting close to each other, seeing, hearing and experiencing the effects of these processes. There is commonness in what we do now. This common state of ours is called the *wakeful* state. It means we are awake now to ourselves, and also to whatever we do and experience. There is no conflict between any two of us in the seeing and hearing we do. This common state, wakefulness, is only one part or phase of our mind's expression.

There is another part, phase, in a way even more important than this. Verily that is the basis of our present state, although in its effects it is opposed or dissimilar to wakefulness. In that, unlike now, we are totally oblivious of everything, including ourselves. It is the state of *deep sleep*. Obviously the two are opposed to each other in the experiences they produce.

In the waking state, the mind links us to the objects outside, to make us aware of them. In the sleep state, it behaves absolutely differently. It links us to something inmost, different from the objects and the body, though we do not know what that inmost factor is. All that we are able to know is that the mind takes itself away from the body and the outside objects. We remain deluded, unable to know anything more about the sleep state.

Leaving the waking state all of us easily slip into sleep, and rising up from sleep, we plunge again into wakefulness. This is a regular feature with us. Nevertheless, no one is able to draw any spiritual lessons from sleep, pointing to the existence of anything like the Soul or the way to reach it. Our wakeful state does not in any spiritual way get influenced by the sleep state. Both remain in their respective places of worth and usefulness.

But, there is evidently a secret of supreme worth in the mind sinking suddenly into the sleep state, and then with equal facility rising up from its hide-out, to manifest the wakeful state again without causing any conflict. Our thinkers have made a great philosophy out of this seemingly simple phenomenon. The clues to evolve and practise the *stita-prajna* state are hidden in the sleep state, in what precedes and follows it.

The trouble is that we do not study all the mental states we have, and try to string them together to make a connected whole. Only when one gets into a mental crisis like Arjuna's, an enquiry or search is made to find out what exactly is the source which will give us the stability to sustain our life.

भारतीय विद्या भवन पुस्तकालय
प्राप्त
संख्या

When is Consciousness Steady

Sri Krishna now describes the *stita-prajna* state:

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

Ch. 2, V. 55

> When, abandoning all kinds of imaginations arising in the mind, one is able to remain contented with his own Self, within himself, then is he said to be a *stita-prajna*.

I spoke about the sleep state for the contrast it has to the *stita-prajna* state.

Krishna's description contains two parts: (1) Abandoning all desires and imaginations created by the mind, and then (2) the reaching of a state of supreme contentment as a result. Krishna lays enough stress on both, as the former alone leads to the latter.

Desire is the force or urge which generally motivates the mind for whatever it does. Desire has many other offshoots like hatred, fear, doubt, etc. But basically, the mind derives its motivation from desire. As one grows old, the desire too grows in number, kind, strength and complexity. If you had a very *thin* mind when you were young, you will be having a *very thick* mind now, after having grown old.

The desire can be secular, worldly, and can also be spiritual, religious. When one becomes a seeker of Truth, the importance for worldly things will grow less in his mind. The thoughts of the Self will gain more importance. His practice of contemplation will strengthen the outlook. And gradually the worldly gain will prove to be nothing before the Self-gain, as it happened in the case of Arjuna. Nevertheless, it is a new desire, which motivates the mind to seek spiritual gains. The object of desire is different, I agree; nonetheless, there is a desire in him, and there is an object too for that desire.

Let the nature of desire in pursuing contemplation be anything. For the simple reason that it is mind-born, mind-caused, mind-supported, Sri Krishna says it should be left aside. Herein lies the role of *viveka,* discrimination. Our aim is to make the mind non-vibrant, non-oscillating. If this is so, even in the very name of our ideal, can we afford to invite and breed oscillation? The moment the mind works, agitation will result. Whatever causes the mind to work or move should be avoided. The seeker should not show any reluctance in this.

Sarvaan Manogataan, means everything and all originating from the mind or caused by it. So, do not distinguish between this desire and that, secular motivation and spiritual motivation, while practising contemplation. Whatever be the kind of desire, it will definitely tense the mind, making it restless and vibrant. And that is what we want to avoid. So be careful, be discerning, and make no error.

Now a question can arise. Does not sleep imply such a development? Even the most worried individual goes to sleep ! In sleep, while sleeping, he has no desires; his mind does not move or vibrate at all. So why is the need to renounce all motivations of the mind for reaching the spiritual quietness, the quietitude of the Self?

This is the exact point Sri Krishna wants to clarify. If it is merely a kind of mind's restfulness or stillness, as somewhat in deep sleep, then the question of abandoning desires does not arise. But the seeker wants to reach at something *unlike* the sleep state, in order to get the fulfilment he looks for. After your sleep, do you get up to say 'I was happy all along—not that I was forgetful of all—and I have found the inmost centre or prop to which the mind ties itself in order to forget everything; I have found my light and wisdom?' Why not?

The state of sleep means removal of oneself from the external contacts, but by the same fact, it does not imply filling oneself with something, to his knowledge and awareness. This is the marked contrast between the sleep state and the samadhi we speak of.

Sleep settles in us without any effort. Does any one do sadhana for knowing to sleep and to be sleeping? Sleep is a biological development, provided and occasioned by Nature periodically, cyclically. The new-born children sleep more than they remain wakeful. Ever since our birth, the sleep state has been as much with us as the wakeful state. So it does not call for any deliberate exertion on our part.

The *stita-prajna* state is not so. First of all, one has to be told about it. As I said earlier, the state of our mind—consciousness—ever after birth, is *astita* (unsteady). The whole of our life and activities conduce to the *astitatwa* (unsteadiness) more and more. We shall never have any chance of getting the *stita* state, except after knowing about it first—like Arjuna from Krishna—and then making our own efforts for getting it.

Stita-prajna Meditation Unique

You should therefore contemplate, what for? To keep away, renounce, all forms of desire and imagination. Whatever arises from the mind, in whichever manner, for whatsoever purpose, should be abandoned by you, using *viveka*. This means, the initial efforts in meditation should be for removing from the mind all kinds of desire and imagination. Why does Krishna specify like this?

Meditation can be done for several purposes. Beginning with *japa*, all kinds of mental effort, done with a religious attitude, go by the name 'meditation'. Keeping a particular God as their *Ishta Daiva*, aiming to get some specific gain, earthly or heavenly, people do meditation. Think of Arjuna himself. Without sleep, day and night, he went on meditating upon Lord Siva for winning a powerful weapon, in order to fight the forthcoming war. Was it not a meditation, very effective too?

Self-meditation, for getting *stita-prajnata* is an entirely different process. In that, there can be no object, nor any objective. On the other hand, all objectives are to be sternly set aside, and the mind made clean and pure. Purity of the mind is its ability to get rid of desires and their offshoots.

Suppose you take to a meditation like this; what will happen? There can be only two possibilities: One is the mind getting into a state of stupor, as in sleep. If that does not occur, then it will remain as the pure, independent consciousness, which is its nature. So you should be careful to prevent it from entering the sleep state. Well, then, it should naturally become restful. Is it only that?

No. *Atmani eva aatmanaa tushtah*, says Krishna. As it becomes restful, becomes poised, it should give rise to a spontaneous delight. The delight should not spring from anything external or alien to it, but from its own pure content and quality. The sadhaka must feel content effortlessly, from himself, his own Self. You can verify the state by raising these questions : 'Is the mind vibrating or moving on any account whatever? If it does not, does it delight me? Is the delight satisfying and fulfilling? If the answers are an unconditional 'yes', then, according to Sri Krishna, the state implies *stita-prajnata.*

Is not such a state of natural, effortless and spontaneous contentment, in which you are fully awake, conscious and alert, diametrically opposed to the sleep state? It is, by its very nature.

In the normal wakeful hours, the mind remains active. It is pursuing some motivation or another. In the process it also gets linked with some object, external or internal. So it is all through a state of activity and interaction. Whereas, in the state of *stita-prajna*, it is neither active nor interacting. There is nothing sought by the mind to interact with. On the other hand, every kind of seeking is avoided, so that the mind will remain itself, unmoving. To have such an unmoving state may appear to be difficult. But it is possible, no doubt.

The New Culture

After we are born, we teach the mind the art of learning and working, and for the purpose, give it a number of motivations like desire, hatred, fear etc. This is a culture, to which we initiate the mind customarily, hereditarily. Naturally, the mind grows with it, day after day, month after month, year after year. The habit has now become so strong that the mind is unable to extricate itself from it even for a while. This is our sad plight.

Therefore, it requires the gradual implanting of a new and opposite culture to help the mind get disentangled from the defects it suffers from. The timely exposure to spiritual thoughts, practice of Yoga sadhana, greater and deeper rumination of Scriptural statements and revelations; all these will build up the new culture in the mind and intelligence, and that in turn will ripen into the *stita-prajna* pursuit, provided you are earnest in what you do.

You cannot argue that the spiritual pursuit is hard. There is no justification for stamping it as impossible. The question merely is whether you want the pursuit or not! Take me to one who says that spiritual practices are irksome and impossible for the ordinary man. Wher is it written that Yoga sadhana is hard? In fact, this is the only pursuit which every one, the rich as well as the poor, the educated as well as the uneducated, man as well as woman, young as also the old, can take up with full vigour. Our Scriptures, including the Gita, declare that the true spiritual practice is easy and comfortable. You should use your *viveka* to find out such positive declarations and make sure that you are guided by them.

The effort to get at the *stita-prajna* state is truly the effort to unfold oneself, to make the mind rid of all object-associations, to make the subject in us freed from its object-hold or object-embrace. Whenever we begin to experience something, the consciousness in us divides, as it were, into a subject–object relationship. The experience, in fact, arises from such a division or breaking. As against this, during the Self-meditation, what you have to do is to disallow any such division, and bring about a facile homogenity, singularness, by which the mind will settle to be the pure and simple consciousness, which it is. This is what Krishna means to say.

Desire the Real Bondage

There is a verse in Yogavaasishta, in which Sage Vasishta tells Sri Rama;

बन्धो हि वासनाबन्धो मोक्षः स्यात् वासनाक्षयः।
वासनां त्वं परित्यज्य मोक्षार्थित्वमपि त्यज॥

Bandho hi vaasanaa-bandho mokshah syaat vaasanaa-kshayaha
Vaasanaam twam parityajya mokshaarthitwam-api tyaja

What goes by the name *bondage* is the association of desires; as long as the mind is held by desires, the mind holds desires, bondage prevails. Therefore, leave, O Rama, your desires first; and finally leave the desire to get liberation too. The desire for liberation is fostered as a counter to the other desires. When the world-desires are surrendered, and they fall off, then with that strength, renounce the liberation-desire also.

In two stages, thus, the normal mind is led to freedom, loneliness, purity, its own deep felicity. The *moksha desire* is fed to it, in preference to the other desires; and then in the next stage, even that is taken away, letting the mind be alone. It may appear strange for you. But this is the ultimate truth. And the discerning souls will be able to grasp it properly.

In Gita itself, later, Krishna tells Arjuna :

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्॥

Ch. 6, V. 26

The reference is to actual meditation. Sit in a place, says Krishna, and try to collect your mind, by gaining control over its distraction and diffusion. Whenever it tries to go out, as it were, dissuade it and bring it back. Try to tie it to its own centre or trunk. Do it slowly, steadily. In other words, make the mind rest upon its own substance. Let it not move. The language used is going out, and bringing back to. The content is the same.

In the previous verse Krishna specifies:

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत्।

Ch. 6, V. 25

Ensure that the mind abides in the Self, its own pure essence. Once it does so, you feel that it does, do *not think* at all. Even to think, anything whatever, will be a disruption. What does this signify? Think and find out. All these are references to the *stita-prajna* state and the approach to it.

I don't go into the details of the samadhi experiences, the different spiritual states met with in meditation, like *savikalpa samadhi*, *nirvikalpa samadhi*, etc. It is not necessary for our purpose now. *

To lead the mind to the *stita-prajna* state by means of meditation requires a lot of diligence and assiduous effort. But one can do it and must.

Stita-dhee's Life of Action

The first question of Arjuna is answered. Sri Krishna now takes up the second question: "What will the *stita-dhee* speak?" The *stita-prajna's* description is to be given by another person, for his state makes the *stita-prajna* speechless and even mindless, so to say. But the *stita-dhee* is not so. How?

The *prajna* (consciousness) itself becomes steady and non-vibrant in the *stita-prajna* state. The *stita* quality is for the *prajna*, consciousness. Naturally, any expression, for which the consciousness must undergo a movement or vibration within it, will be impossible in that state. Suppose a sadhaka is immersed in the *stita-prajna* state, and I happen to see it. By looking at him, maybe I can say that his consciousness is steady, absorbed and motionless. He will not respond to anything or any one. Naturally, the question of describing himself does not arise. Another person, knowing his state from its exterior traits, alone can describe him, his experience.

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* Those of you who have read the books "Reality and the Method to Trace it" and "Advanced Lessons in Meditation and Self-realization", must have found some discussion on these points.

But once he wakes up from that state, the mind, intelligence and responses revive their normal functions. And he will be able to interact with people and things. If the former is an inactive state, the latter is quite active. That is the difference. This difference means a lot, and it affords a large scope for the *stita-prajna* as well as for the others.

Unlike one who gets up from sleep, not knowing what happened to him during the sleep, this man, awakened from the *stita-prajna* samadhi, knows fully well what happened to him during that state. Therefore, he can give expression to whatever he wants. Naturally, what he experienced uniquely in the samadhi will manifest freely in his speech and insight. With the authority born out of his own experience, he can now say whether there is anything like the Self or Soul, of what nature it is, what it is like to be embraced by it or absorbed in it. The entire spiritual mystery will stand revealed before his vision. He becomes a Seer, a Knower, a man heading for liberation, or one already liberated.

It is from such persons that Scriptures like the Upanishads, Epics and the like have emerged. They it is who come face to face with the Supreme Truth and the Invisible God, and begin to speak doubtlessly about them, on their own behalf. With their mind purified, intelligence sharpened and insight sanctified, they are able to penetrate into the abstruse areas of morality and ethics, unearth the subtle laws operating there and lay them open before the common man for his guidance and light.

All *stita-dhees* may not be alike in their power of expression or the fund of knowledge they possess. As I mentioned, the state can be pursued and attained by the educated as well as the illiterate. Their personal experiences will be the same, but the ways in which they give expression to them will be different. That is because of the varying intellectual and mental capacities they have. The words used, the phrases coined, the similes and metaphors adopted for communicating their thoughts; all these are bound to be governed by the general knowledge and experience of each person.

That is why in this country you find Seers of various orders. But not all of them begin to write, or if they write, not all write alike, in the same level and style. One Seer may know English, and another may not. The third may be unable to read and write even. That does not disqualify him from being a Knower of the Self. To know the Self, you do not need any language or grammar. And so the knowledge gained will not make the same marked oral or literary expression in every one to the same degree.

However, all will have a new finding, an unprecedented anchor in them, a perennial source within, from which they can draw abundant strength to remain unshakeable at heart.

The *stita-prajna* state's benefits are primarily *swa-samvedya*, evident to oneself, not *para-pratyaksha*, visible to the others. In fact, the entire Self-knowledge is felt by oneself, not by another. It is difficult to say whether any one is a Knower of Truth or not. Judged on this basis, there is a distinct development in the *stita-dhee*. Conversely, only when such a development is there, the *stita-prajna* state and pursuit become meaningful. Sri Krishna, therefore, describes who is a *stita-dhee*.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

Ch. 2, V. 56

The Sage, whose mind is unshaken by the incidence of sorrows, and equally unelated by pleasures, and who, hence, floats above desire, hatred and fear, is the one of steady and resolute intelligence.

The import of this verse is also missed by sadhakas in general. I have already said that in the *stita-prajna* state, in the so-called samadhi, there is no chance for any thought or interaction. It is an action-less, action-free state. But the moment one gets up from it, the consciousness becomes active and interacting. In fact, it is an activity of the consciousness that wakes up the *stita-prajna*, as from sleep. So from the very moment of waking up, he will be in activity, interaction, till he plunges again into *samadhi* or alternately goes to sleep. You have to keep this truth in mind.

When he becomes so active, interaction of all kinds will become necessary. What effects will they produce for him? For the ordinary people, any activity and interaction will imply mental reactions. These reactions have a uniformity, a standard, whether you agree or not. Philosophy is the scientific evaluation of our life—whatever it means in fact, in effect and in the ultimate outcome. Let us see what takes place in our wakeful hours, and what experiential status does it bring for us.

Sri Krishna has already defined life as an interaction between our senses and the objects of the world. In whatever you do, such an interaction is implied during the wakeful state. Krishna analyses the process and shows how the *sense—object* contact inevitably results in the twin experiences called *sukha* and *duhkha*. Here is Krishna's description:

Our Life a Constant Interaction

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः तान् तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥

Ch. 2, V. 14

So, like *seeta* (cold) and *ushna* (heat), the objects, by their contacts with our senses, or vice versa, produce the two mind-experiences called *sukha* and *duhkha*. They arise not because we want them, but because their occurrence is natural and inevitable. *Sukha* and *duhkha* are mutual opposites. They vary from individual to individual, time to time, place to place, and situation to situation. Even then, their mutually opposite character does not change. This is the only verdict we can make about them.

No one, at any time, anywhere, on any account can hope to have, normally, a mind-experience other than *sukha* and *duhkha*. This is a fundamental assessment. See if you can invalidate it. Nothing more can the world ever produce.

Pleasantness, *sukha*, by its very nature makes us love it, chase it, try to make it last longer and longer. And *duhkha*, unpleasantness, by its nature makes us resent it, avoid it, every time. We are unable to escape this *twin-involvement*, by which we *like* one and *dislike* another.

But by your dislike, will the *duhkha* reaction evoked by the objects keep away? By your over-liking, will the *sukha* experience linger, prolong itself? Both will not. Each of the two will grip us every time, one following the other. At no time will both be away, leaving us free mentally. By their force, we are obliged to be in perpetual torment; the torment being that the *sukha* we like does not last, and the *duhkha* we dislike does persist too. So it becomes a constant defeat for us, a distress, a lingering crisis itself! We struggle against it on and on, finding no way out, yet getting victimized again and again. This is the inevitable state of delusion every human mortal suffers from, is obliged to live with.

Stita-dhee's Reflections

The *stita-dhee* marks a full contrast to this sad plight of mankind. He experiences the state of *prajna* (consciousness), in which neither the *sukha* reaction nor the *duhkha* torment was there. For the first time, he has found a unique state of awareness, in which it rises, as it were, to an altogether new dimension of neutrality, serenity and transcendence. He had never known about anything like that earlier. He did not also feel that there was a possibility of preserving our awareness, and yet feeling serene and unruffled.

"Ha, is there anything like this? And it is within my reach! The sense of elation is a wave, and that of sorrow is another wave. Both are agitations, causing disturbance verily. And here now was a state of *no-waveness*, in which I was *as I am*, but with no distraction of any kind. There was no *plus* or *minus* for the mind in that state. At the same time, it was not a full zero, denoting something unintelligible or vague. I was fully awake, and I was feeling the radiance of something unique, transcendental. Well, this is the correct position for me to seek, stabilize and preserve. No more shall I yearn to swing to the *sukha* condition, begging it to linger; equally so I shall no more resent the *duhkha* response aroused by the world, struggling to escape it.

"Equipped with this new sense, outlook, strengthened by the higher insight I have struck now, I shall be indifferent to both, the *sukha-duhkhas*, inevitable as they are, nay natural as they are, as part of the world and our life in it. Let them be as they are and let me be *as I am*. I will not interfere with them, nor shall I allow them to interfere with me. Each will shine in its own place and relevance. If at all, they are ornamental to me, and I, the neutral and homogeneous Self that I am, am equally ornamental to them. We are friends, well-wishers, assisting, helping, enriching and fulfilling each other amply. Ah, I am released now. No more am I deluded about me or about them, about the world, and what my interaction with it means. Shall I say—I am illumined......"

Naturally, he remains unperturbed, unruffled, by the occurrence of *duhkhas*. It is not that the *duhkha*–producing events, situations and the like, are not there for him. This is where people make a cardinal error. *Duhkhas* are the outcome which the mind is bound to undergo, if the senses in us contact their objects in the world. They are as much part of our life as the in-going and out-going breaths. The factor which governs their incidence is the world around us and the senses in us. As long as these two are there, the reaction born of their contact, cannot but be.

Why should the *stita-dhee* grumble then ? If he grumbles, he stoops to be an ordinary man, like any other. He sought spiritual life, pursued contemplation, and finally succeeded in getting into the *stita–prajna* samadhi, not to be bewailing and complaining like the common men and women. It was his great effort, exalted ambition, to gain for him a safe inner abode, living in which, he can live out the world and its reactions. And here now has come the right opportunity, the great status he was looking for.

So the *duhkhas*, their occurrence, along with the causes responsible for them, all lose their potency in him. He remains unagitated by them. Is that all? *Sukhas*, the alternate of *duhkhas*, will also prevail for him, as will for any one else in the world. To meet *sukhas*, he has a new point of view. They no more hold any special charm. *Sukha*, he will realize, is as natural and frequent as *duhkha*. Either alone cannot be. So he concludes, he must and will have *sukha* and *duhkha* alike, one after the other. They are part of the cycle, two hemispheres making the globe of our life in the world. He, therefore, neither prefers *sukha*, nor does he abhor *duhkha*. In his assessment, there is an equal place for both.

His mind was somehow constricted earlier, but now it is free and comprehensive. His inner width and depth having increased, he welcomes any measure of the mutual opposites. With every in-coming of either of them, he feels his vision and wisdom growing more and more. And thus, there is no special love, favourableness and charm for him in the *sukha*-giving factors. He does have *sukha*, as an effect brought by the mind and world together, but no more does it tempt him with a lingering taste or reaction.

Do you now understand how a new dimension, a lofty and serene outlook, takes root in the *stita-prajna*?

Transcending the Mind

Now comes the second part of the verse: The *stita-dhee* is one who rises above desire, hatred and fear. This again is a reference to the mind—how it generally works, and how it should and will work in one when he is awakened to the Self. Desire is the primary motivation for the mind, as we have already found. It creates a force, whereby you are attracted to an object, an ideal, a pursuit or otherwise. Opposed to this is the other force called hatred, which repels you from. One pushes forward; the other pulls back.

Fear is something more common and general. It applies to each and every facet of the mind's motivations. You fear whether your desire can be pursued properly and realized, and will the benefits last as long as you want or not. In the context of hatred, the fear is whether the thing hated will somehow be thrust on you by something or someone. Fear can have other associations too. Even in the spiritual pursuit and gains, it can prevail. 'Will my body fall before I realize the Truth? ... No, it should not. Will I steadily pursue my goal?

Desire through attraction, hatred through repulsion and fear through agitation or commotion, go on disturbing the mind constantly. Even for the *stita-prajna*, in the initial phase, there may be some trouble arising out of his desire to perpetuate the state. Once the desire grips him, fear and the rest will also creep in. It takes some time before he can, by resorting to greater *viveka*, get away from the *post-samadhi* discontent and troubles. It is not that one gets into the *stita-prajna* state once, and with that the whole mind stands changed, making him a *stita-dhee*. *Dhee*, the intelligence, will have to find its light, inspiration and assurance from the samadhi experience, and make them abide constantly.

For example, looking at *sukha* and *duhkha* from the new angle, the *buddhi* will have to remain unshaken in both of them. Similarly, it should find a new fillip to pursue life and do activities. The usual triplets of desire, hatred and fear should vacate the mind, giving place to a sublime, wholesome attitude:

'I am born because of the body, governed by the human biological laws. O. K. Let the born body continue to live. I shall *live* the thoughts, culture and insight, which I have gained from my *stita-prajnata.* Why should I *desire to live* at all? Any one will live whether he desires or not. To hate is to carry an irksome load in the mind. The hated person and object may not know that I hate them. The hatred still aches my heart. Like a boil on the body, it is a sceptic ulcer in my mind. I should try to heal it the earliest. About fear, why should I entertain it at all?

'Whatever may take place, I am what I have been and will be. My life is a combination, an alliance, so to say, of the Self and the body. The body is material and the Soul is spiritual. The Soul, which was in the body at and before birth, will continue to be in it till death. Nothing is going to increase or decrease the Soul any time. By fearing, the mind and intelligence will remain agitated. That is all. Studied properly, any fear has no valid ground. Nature's world, governed by Nature's laws, will continue to be complex. I shall live in tune with these laws, as far as they apply to my life. In doing so, I fulfil my duty, my purpose, my ambition, my goal. I can never cause a *plus* or *minus* to Nature. Equally, there is nothing additional, reductional or multiplicational in the horizon of the Self. The Soul is itself and *I am That.* I am, therefore, myself; never shall I be anything else, either more or less.

'Let me be content with this sense of constantness, sameness, oneness and fullness. That is my fulfilment.'

Whenever he gets weak or disheartened, if at all, he will seek the *stita-prajna* state to gain relief. Waking from it, the intelligence will strengthen its insight, re-affirm its new sense of values and deepen its attitude. Thus, leaving wakefulness to the *stita-prajna* state, rising from that to be in the world again, it will undergo a full orientation, maybe gradually, by which it is able to remain sufficiently steady and unaffected. Then indeed does one become a lofty *Muni* of the *stita-dhee* order.

The further verses describe the post-samadhi sadhana, if it can be called so, along with a number of ancillary and edifying instructions. We shall see what they are tomorrow.

End of the Second Day's Talk.

THIRD DAY'S TALK

Stita-prajna versus Stita-dhee

Yesterday I spoke to you about the *stita-prajna* state and the *stita-dhee* development, which follows it. The point raised is very significant. Generally the words *stita-prajna* and *stita-dhee* are regarded as synonymous, and people use them to denote the same sense. But in reality, their implications are different, particularly for sadhakas. So let me explain the concepts more thoroughly.

Stita-prajnata is an experience, a state, which embraces our consciousness, during which the awareness in us remains steady, non-moving. It has no implication of any internal or external activity. We speak of it only in connection with Self-knowledge and its pursuit. The so many other forms of meditation, done for various purposes, have nothing to do with *stita-prajna* samadhi at all.

But *stita-dhee* is a quality, a culture, a refinement, which the sadhaka develops as a result of his *stita-prajna* state. As a supreme quality, a great enrichment, it will remain with him wherever he is and whatever he does. While the *stita-prajna* state will come and go, as a state (*avasthaa*) like sleep, the *stita-dheetwa* will not. Just like the knowledge of chemistry or geometry gained by a student, is retained by him, this too will be retained by the intelligence of the seeker, to be used whenever needed. Unlike the other kinds of knowledge, the *stita-dheetwa* becomes relevant and useful every time, throughout the entire *vyavahaara* (wakeful activity).

By experiencing the *stita-prajna* state alone, can you acquire the *stita-dhee* fruition, not without it. This is definite. We can use the description *stita-dhee* only in the context of a seeker of spiritual truth, and that too of one who is able to experience *samadhi*. Even the *samadhi* he begets must be strictly of the *stita-prajna* order, not any other. The relationship between *stita-prajnata* and *stita-dheetwa* is quite wholesome, inseparable. From the one alone can develop the other.

Also, there is a time-lag between the entry into the *stita-prajna* state and achieving the *stita-dhee* level. One is a practice, and the other is an attainment which results from it. You may ask: How long is one to practise *stita-prajnata* in order to become a *stita-dhee* ? There is no definite answer to this. It is somewhat like sleep, which you need every day as a corollary to wakefulness. Only to a very limited extent, you can interfere with your sleep, its duration and periodicity. Otherwise, it is regular, cyclic and indispensable.

But the *stita-prajna* state is not so. Its duration, periodicity and indispensability are entirely different. Its role is spiritual and philosophical, and is meant to surcharge the sadhaka with a unique experience, which will give rise to the building up of a new wholesome outlook about himself and the world. This building up takes place in the wakeful hours, while involved in activity.

So, more than the *stita-prajna* state, its experience and pursuit, the *stita-dheetwa* 'fruition' depends upon the diligence with which you are able to culture your mind and intelligence, and bring about their refinement and stability. The individual's keenness, sharpness, tenacity and dedication count a great deal in this process. That is why you find some sadhakas, even while they are young, grow fast to become great and renowned Saints. Compared to an old man given to spiritual practices, their maturity will be quite less, the length of their spiritual life being very short. Even then, they become more deep and penetrating in their vision and experience. The reason is not so much the *stita-prajna* state of theirs, but the *stita-dhee* qualities they are able to build, stabilize and preserve as a result.

So it is an open question before the seekers. Try to get into the *stita-prajna* state by pursuing contemplation, as I have explained. Then, stabilize its outcome as well as possible, and become *stita-dhees*. This is my message for you all. Of course, there is a rule or law which governs the individual's spiritual progress and attainment. It belongs to Nature, and therefore, is, as natural as the laws governing our body and its functions. I do not propose to discuss them now.

Emphasis on Intelligence

Krishna uses the word *dhee*, which denotes intelligence, in several places, while discussing *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* and *Moksha*. Gita is very specific about these references. I shall cite a few of them:

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः। II-49

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते। II-50

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः। II-51

स्थिरबुद्धिः असंमूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः। V-20

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः। XII-14

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव। XVIII-57

In all these statements, the stress made is on the intelligence, its working and wide scope. Naturally the significance is that the ultimate culture, the stability, sublimity, grace and unshakeability resulting from it, is to be derived by the intelligence. All the spiritual *experiences* including the *stita-prajnata* are just states, which will come and go, like the sleep state. Their lasting effects are the influences they shed when we wake up. Remaining within the wakeful state as memory or inspiration, they can illumine the intelligence in various ways: What is the Self or Soul? When is a direct knowledge of the Self gained? Viewed from the standpoint of the Self and Self-knowledge, what are the world experiences and our reactions to them? What should our real attitude and assessment about our life as well the world be? All these questions will find a full answer in one who experiences the *stita-prajna* samadhi.

The mystery about the 'direct perception' having been unveiled, the whole sphere of Truth will thus become clear. The clarity dawned will then form the basis of everything we do, enjoy or suffer. Delusions will start disappearing, one after another, til we become satisfied with our own enlightened position and status. The whole post-*stita-prajna* development is thus for the intelligence, by it and in it. From the worldly level, the intelligence will rise to the spiritual pedestal. The ascent is for it. The Self just remains. IT IS, in the same manner, so far not, perceived, but now fully crystal clear before the intelligence. The discovery, though of the Self, is for the intelligence. The Self was static, passive; is and will be. Realization and sublimation are for the *buddhi* alone.

How Grows the Stita-dhee

The *stita-dhee* was described to be one who, by virtue of his new culture, orientation, rises above the triple promptings of the mind—*raaga, dwesha* and *bhaya.* Well, this is a subjective development, cognizable only to himself. The *stita-dhee's* mind, like anyone else's, is not visible to us. How much was it in the grip of desire, dislike and fear, and to which extent has it now become free from their stronghold, cannot be judged by us. The attainment reveals itself inwardly. But, will it not also have some external expression? Krishna, therefore, analyses the *stita-dhee* from another standpoint.

The *stita-dhee* state, he now relates to the outer situations, the people and society around. Here comes the question of the *stita-dhee's vyavahaara*, his activities in the world, interactions with others. *Vyavahaara* cannot be avoided either before or after attaining the spiritual states. The redress in *samadhi* is sought because of the torment caused by *vyavahaara.* And after getting the redress, it is *vyavahaara* that begets the benefit or outcome. Devoid of *vyavahaara*, there is no question of any one seeking or attaining anything.

The *stita-dhee's vyavahaara* will likely be much more than what it is for the others. For, his potentials and qualities have increased now enormously. With the additional benefits he has gained, he becomes equipped to take up more activity, varied interactions, along with the consequences that follow. His psychological system, having been refined variously, will call for, be ready and broad enough to accommodate a lot more of creative functions. Sri Krishna begins to describe him like this:

यः सर्वत्र अनभिस्नेहः तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम्।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥

Ch. 2, V. 57

Anabhi-snehah is a very significant word. It contains a lot of ideas relevant to the spiritual seeker and his growth. It shows how the vision of one, who has achieved *stita-prajnata*, changes abruptly to develop an expanding character, and how, on this account, it stands as a full contrast to that of the ordinary man. The mind we notice in an ordinary individual is very narrow and partial. It fosters love and concern for only a limited circle of people called the family, the near and dear ones. Philosophically studied, it is a delusion by which the human mind remains 'attached' to the family, unable to get rid of it even if it wants.

The attachment to the family, a deep sense of inseparability with its members, grows in any one as a matter of course after his birth into the world. The development is conventional, a product of heredity. The forces and laws of Nature are responsible for it. That which Nature brings about, a thing which you are constrained to honour, can hardly be an achievement on your part. Any achievement or greatness must imply a deliberate effort on your part, which the others are inclined to find exceptional. I said this only to show how the sense of attachment (*abhi-sneha*) the people in general have cannot be any ground for their greatness.

Spiritual greatness certainly implies some lofty dimensions in the seeker's or the Knower's personality, which conduce to the welfare of the people around him. His life should be of some noble use to the society. *Stita-prajnata*, says Krishna, brings in its wake a definite expansion, a significant growth and finer revelation in the workings of one's mind. In other words, only one who is prepared to rise above the narrow and limited thoughts imposed by the mind, can hope to become a *stita-prajna*. Once the samadhi state is experienced, the mind will begin to expand effortlessly. Such an expanding mind's features are what Sri Krishna describes in this verse.

Spiritual states are exalted by their very nature, and to approach them means to be exalted in one's own mind and heart. That is why the Upanishads declare: "There is no delight in the lowly and the trifling; contentment rests upon *the great* alone."

So do not be miserly or paltry in heart and mind. Be rich, noble, charitable, loving and sympathetic. Let your hearts and minds expand into greater and wider circles. Do not tie them down to the small circle of family, relations and friends alone. Feel and say 'I am of the world, of the universe, not solely of this family or that. I am born in a house, all right. But my mind and heart are to be 'born' of the universe, for it in entirety. I want to expand, contain bigger dimensions. Let me be as wide and great in my heart as the Lord of the Universe. At least in this privilege let me be second to none.' Your thoughts should be shaped wholeheartedly.

When loftier thoughts begin to occupy your mind, its dimensions will spontaneously grow. You will become broader deeper, higher and greater inside. The feeble and limited attachments will disappear, and in their place gentle and graceful love, fellow-feeling, compassion and the like will sprout. The spiritual path is always one of revelation, expansion, elevation; harming none and blessing everyone. In a mind that begins to grow, disturbances and afflictions will naturally weaken, decline, and logically speaking, they will be extinct one day.

The Invaluable Benefits

Anabhi-sneha can be taken to mean "devoid of the usual attachments", or "given to broader and higher interests, associations". I will say, both denote the same kind of development. How?

We preserve the customary thoughts and concerns simply because we do not know of anything higher or broader. We are not told by anyone usually to grow out of the common narrowness, and be given to nobility and greatness. We also do not have any prop or help, even if we, for a while, feel like growing. By birth we are tied to our family. We live and move with our relations. Naturally the association breeds in our mind a set pattern of emotions, sentiments and thoughts. A sense of identification results, which makes us enjoy or suffer along with those whom we are identified with. It is not bad, for to that extent our individual mind has become broader, social.

But is this all that we want, we are capable of? Is not the human born to be far superior in every way!? When will he try for the greatness he should gain? Is it not in this world, before he falls dead upon this earth?

Spiritual seeking and the benefits it brings, especially the experience of the *stita-prajna* state, holds a definite answer to all these questions. Sri Krishna always uses the best adjectives to describe the Yogi, the Knower, the Devotee. His words are alluring. They will fascinate any one, even the atheist:

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्षः उदासीनो गतव्यथः। XII 16

No kind of dependence constricts his *buddhi*. His mind is free, independent, not suffering from any adverse thought or emotion. He is clean at heart. His intentions are noble, great and helpful to any one. A sense of supreme indifference, unconcernedness, adorns him all through. He is inwardly redeemed, rescued, from the usual touch of pain, agony and disappointment. His inside becomes free like the pure air.

Do you not wish for such a free-flowing mind? Is here an adjective which you will dislike? So the *stita-dhee*, before and after becoming so, reflects upon qualities like these. From the narrow circle called 'family', his mind begins to grow into a much larger group. The sense of identification in his mind expands to cover the individuals outside the orbit of his relations. He becomes a mark of the society, the nation's shining example, the Pride of world itself! In doing so, a new feature possesses him, his outlook.

Moderation the Exalted Virtue

He likes to be moderate in his reactions. What is this moderation? He is not unduly delighted or over-depressed by anything. Having gained an over-all view, a comprehensive vision, he sees the universe with all its multiplex assortments alike. There is nothing single or uniform. He realises that all sides together constitute the 'whole' of Nature. In the world, there is a place and significance for everything that is in it. Our life, interacting with the world, will bring in a variety of outcomes, fruitions. It is short-sightedness to think of only some of them as 'acceptable'. The moment we begin to specify the acceptable, with that will emerge the rejectable too. Slowly we realise that the acceptable is much less in quantity, and the rejectable is in the greater measure.

Why then make such a mental trap at all and get imprisoned? The moment we start liking fortune, its opposite becomes dislikable. As much as our likes grow strong, so much surely will the dislikes too. It becomes a vicious circle. And can we avoid misfortunes altogether? As I said about *sukha-duhkhas*—they are inevitable in the process of sense-object contacts – *subha* (auspicious) and *asubha* (inauspicious) developments are unavoidable in the context of our life and the world. As Kalidasa, the famous poet, has said :

नीचैर्गच्छत्युपरि च दशा चक्रनेमिक्रमेण।

Neechair-gacchat-yupari cha dasaa chakra-nemi-kramena

Like the two halves of a wheel in motion, the course of our life in the world goes on revolving, causing ups and downs alternately.

Think of the pendulum. It swings between two extreme positions. While its motion is continuous, the process is repetitive. Every time it completes a movement, the earlier course is repeated. The same truth applies to our life also. The world acting upon us can likewise produce only a revolving, alternating development—a course of cyclicness, involving two phases. If you call one of them as *subha* (auspicious occurrence), the other becomes its opposite, *asubha* (inauspicious event). These two have to appear again and again. The occurrences may be on the bodily or sensory level. Nevertheless, their feature is common.

One day when you get up in the morning, you may feel fresh and energetic. The body is quite supple, agile. This means, it is an auspicious day, in the bodily level. The same afternoon, your mind gets worried unusually, and you feel tense and afflicted. That is an inauspicious development, viewed in the mental plane. In the intellect level also, there can be such auspicious and inauspicious alternates. However, all these are parallel developments, but in different planes.

That is why I said that like the motion of a pendulum, the course of life can only swing between the auspicious end and the inauspicious one. You cannot hope for anything more, less or different. If this be so, why not reconcile to it, with insight, with a broad sense of acceptance? I shall explain a little more, how the *stita-prajna*-experience conduces to the mind's transcending both the *subha* and *asubha* notions during the active and interactive phase of life.

It is the steady unvacillating state of the intelligence which results in *stita-prajna*. In other words, we should not have any sense of disturbance, doubt or torment, while we engage the mind in contemplation. Nothing more is needed as a qualification or merit. The last stage should be rid of even the doubts generated by the Scriptures and their authors. If the emphasis is thus on an undisturbed, unoscillatting state of the consciousness, 'I should prepare my mind to that fruition, every time I wake up and remain active. The insight my intelligence provides to the mind should be such that agitation becomes less and less, making it easy for me to remain absorbed and poised inwardly during my activities.

'All right. By dividing the happenings of my life into auspicious and inauspicious, what do I do? I impress upon the mind a deep sense of preference and prejudice with regard to my life and whatever it fetches. How? By adopting the division, it becomes compulsory for me to relish and accept only one half of my whole life, which means of the world too. The other half thus stands as a definite object of disfavour.' See, while our pursuit is after the things we like, we become victimized, in the same process, by the things we dislike. The world and our life in it, being complex, heterogeneous, are bound to bring in both their *halves*, opposing phases. How can we expect of the world, or our life, to grant us only one half of its contents? Even if we are foolish to do so, will it be of any avail?

Life's Alternating Course

Let us take a very common instance: We experience the day and the night every twenty-four hours of our life-time. You know that the sun does not contain darkness in it. Nor does the sun intend to cause darkness upon our earth. Nevertheless, the interaction of the two results in the incidence of both day and night upon the earth. Think of the reason for it.

The earth, in order to be, goes on revolving in its own axis and also around the sun. You cannot imagine the earth without its revolutional course. Constant revolution exposes only one half of the earth to the sun's rays at any time, the other half remaining un-exposed. The exposed and the non-exposed portions alternate between themselves, again an inevitable outcome of the earth's revolving course. In the process day and night follow, one after the other, cyclically. Like the day and night, weeks, fortnights, months and years also come in consistently. All these repeat themselves, causing a variety of periodical developments. The seasons are caused by these; plants, vegetables, flowers and several other features relating to the mobile and immobile creation, transpire as a further result.

If you look at the whole phenomenon thus, with a fullness of insight, the paltry notions about what you now feel as auspicious and inauspicious are bound to falter and dissipate. The question merely is : "Are you prepared to think largely, widely, deeply and highly ?"

The only way we can grow is to beat down the narrowness our thoughts and emotions try to forge in the mind. To do so, we must take to the broader outlook, higher thoughts and nobler sentiments. The process is quite simple, provided you will think about it patiently. Our mind has grown to be what it is, and behaves the way it does now, only due to its long-standing habits. Part of it is cultivated by us, out of ignorance and delusion. A greater part is carried through heredity, tradition and family lineage. If thus, the present culture is something acquired—in this life of ours, in the lives of our parents, grand-parents and their forefathers—then the new culture can also be sought, gained and preserved. Gita is giving us the correct method by which the new culture, the *stita-prajna* dimension, can be adopted, pursued and completed.

True Perception Explained

The totality of perception about our life and the world around us is taught and emphasised in all aspects of religious and philosophical sadhana. The words used are different; that is all. To the devotee, the message is that he should find the Lord everywhere and in all. Normally, as a devotee, he sees his Lord in something, in some places more and in some less, and in some others not at all. That is his normal dimension. Devotional ideal prescribes that he should grow out of this constricted view of his, and gain a fullness of devotional vision. The sense of divisions, of superiority and inferiority, of being more and less, in connection with God's presence, favour and blessings, should be treated as a disease of the mind and cured.

भारतीय विद्या भवन पुस्तकालय
प्राप्त
दिनांक
संख्या
दिल्ली

"The whole world is the Lord's. You too are His, like the world. So, see the Lord in His own Lordly dimension, as all-pervading and comprehensive. Well, for this, you will have to surrender your particularized notions. You began to see Him in the temple, in the Idol installed there, and in many other things connected with the temple. That was the primary thought in the initial stages of devotional practice. Now that you have grown and you still want to grow in your devotion, give your thoughts a higher and greater dimension, until at last they reach the acme, the zenith. That alone will be the Godliness you seek, you want to realize in your own heart.

"So see God in all—in everything, everywhere; see Him outside as well as inside you. Let Him be as much in your heart as in the heart of the universe, as in the centre of the atom. Let in your perception, every particle individually, and the whole universe collectively, be inhabited and encircled by God. Then will you reach the safest position, the blessed status, from which you will not have to fall, slip or suffer."

About such a Godly dimension of devotional thinking, Sri Krishna's words are:

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ VI–30

Are you now able to relate the idea about being rid of the *subha-asubha* notions as a part of the *stita-prajna* vision, and as a means of rising to the *stita-dhee* position? The principle is the same, as in devotion. Here the orientation is sought on the basis of the Self-experience, *stita-prajnata*, he has had. The suggestion, inspiration, and the guidance should come from that. The hold of good and bad, favourable and unfavourable, auspicious and inauspicious—these mutually opposite notions—on the mind is very deep, impenetrable normally. To divest the mind of it is literally hard. As long as these notions prevail, the uniformity, neutrality and absoluteness we want to gain for us will not be made possible. So, it is a stupendous psychological endeavour to take the sadhana to the further heights. Many seekers, therefore, stop with the samadhi state, wanting to experience it again and again. And by that 'addiction' they remain stunted.

In the villages, omens have a considerable influence in the minds of people. Even Arjuna in the Gita, speaks of '*vipareeta nimitta*' (adverse omen), showing that the consequences of the War would not be good. While starting on a journey, when taking up an important task, in the efforts for negotiations etc., people look to the omens which present themselves. There is a long list of 'promising omens' and 'defeating ones.' Suppose a depressing sight comes in, then people get upset, sometimes even hurt and angry. To avoid evil omens, and make sure that favourable sights are had, sometimes a relative is sent in advance to stand on the way and prevent adverse persons or things coming in front. I have had experiences of this kind in my life.

My mother, though deeply religious and orthodox, had a different point of view. She used to tell me, while going to school, particularly for examinations, to look at the brilliant sun first, and then proceed, saying 'let the sun be the omen for you'. In that way, she made the same good omen to greet me every day. Herein lies the clue to find out how the common mind works, and how the adverse plight can be redressed.

Make Everything God

Religious interpretations and ideals start becoming progressively better, finer, subtler and more comprehensive, as you proceed in your sadhana. The same devotional practice, which was at one time based upon the single Idol of your choice, later matures to include the perception of the Lord in all things, as in the Idol. "Make everything His idol. See the universe itself as the best idolisation of the Lord. Being an active part of it, consider yourself also like that. Think then of that 'supreme' worship, which will encompass the whole range of God, the entirety of the creation. You have been trying to besmear God, His Idol, with your devotion, coat Him with your piety. Now try to be coated, besmeared, yourself with devotion. As you will electro-plate an article of metal with silver or gold, plate your own inner being with the gold of devotion."

At this stage, the attempt becomes subjective. It looked to be objective, God-based, but now it turns out to be subjective, based only upon the subject, that is yourself.

So, the mind, which by its habit and association, is given to the dominant thoughts of auspicious and inauspicious, begins to find no real value and depth in such an outlook. Being illumined, it takes to a new attitude of accepting whatever comes, as part of the beautiful and fulfilling whole. Like the right hand and the left, like the mouth and the rectum, like hunger and thirst and their appeasement, it begins to perceive the respective role for each, in the world outside as well as in our life within it. In place of prefering the auspicious to the inauspicious, which is a differential outlook, it prefers the new attitude of sameness, evenness, towards both. The more this 'equal vision' is practised, the lighter does the mind grow; lesser become its agitations and concerns. Stability is found to prevail easily, more and more. Stability, by itself, tastes well, as an enrichment, a source of strength, confidence and enthusiasm. By the very quality of stability, the mind will remain cheerful. Previously, in order to delight, it had to get at something—a hope, a gain or a company. But now, without any additional factor of gain or the like, the mind, by its own new dimension, seems to become cheerful. Naturally it is a great benefit, advantage. What more does one need? That which was hard to gain, now becomes easy to attain. The whole emphasis thus changes from the object to the Subject.

'Rather than trying to add to myself from the external world of objects and delights, what I should do is to preserve whatever I now have in me, in my mind, as its quality of evenness, stability. This quality is a subtle gain, which, superior to the gross, is more useful, more abiding and hence giving more contentment. Let me retain it in greater measure. Let my attention be on this objective.'

This is the change that takes place in the mind. Sri Krishna describes it as 'neither congratulating nor denouncing—

na abhinandati, na dweshti. The habitual reactions of over-valuing and rejecting, loving and hating, speaking for and against, lessen, and the new benevolent, wholesome attitude of accepting everything in its place, without undue love or bias, prevails.

Nature's Continuity

The quality of *anabhi-snehatwa* arises like this: 'By the laws of Nature, was I born. I grew, also under the same laws. To marry, was again the prompting and possibility held by the same Nature's laws. To rise to parenthood is equally so. In all I find the display of Nature and that alone. So, to think in any glorious terms about my children, and to think in contrasting terms about others' children, is meaningless. All children have to be born to some one or the other. All relationships are incidental to our life, its course and progress. There is nothing to be over-concerned about them. Let the current of life flow on and on, leading me to the last bodily outcome called death, and leading the others too to the same end after a time. I live after my parents, and my children will live after me. It is a long and endless chain. I am only one link in it. The others too are links. All of us together constitute the chain, the composite unit. Where is the occasion to foster hatred, or to love with a differential notion? ...'

Thoughts of this kind fill his mind. Naturally, he incorporates a wider and loftier dimension. The usual impulsiveness departs from him. He will be more and more thoughtful, be prepared to understand more, reconcile with more; and by virtue of all this, he becomes fit to strive for and achieve better. Krishna's words "non-dependent, clean at heart, clever to the core, and feeling no sense of despondency", become true of such a person. The life of a seeker is one of incomparable dedication and excellence. Know this.

The Knower Compares and Contrasts

How will the Knower of Truth, the *stita-dhee*, be, to himself and to the others, is very difficult to understand. The concept may be explained variously; yet it will elude the grasp of the unillumined man. The *stita-dhee's* personal realization of Truth works a world of change in him; nevertheless, how can he afford to be an 'outcast' in the eyes of the others, due to his strange behaviour? So, externally he must preserve his commonness with the people of the world. At the same time, his attainment implants in him a fundamental difference. How to blend this difference with the affinity needed? What is the golden rule for it?

In other words, how far does the Knower compare himself with the others, and to which extent does he stand as a contrast, is an intricate study. Although he has grown from the small circle called family, to the big circle called humanity, he still has to fit in successfully with both the circles, benefiting all alike. To steer himself to this end, he will need a lot of timely orientation. Generally, the process works itself spontaneously over a period of time.

Suppose there is a death of a young member in a family. Do you mean to say that the Knower must laugh at the event, while the others are afflicted and weeping? He will go there like the others, and meet the bereaved, surely with a deeper touch of feeling. You may not find him cry along with the others. Steeped in the great sense of immortality instilled by the Soul, he will look at the event as inevitable, with calm endurance.

The common man does not stop to think of the ephemerality of the world. And, therefore, when the fate is proved before him, he gets unduly shaken. For the Knower, the instance is only a confirmation of the fleeting nature of everyone's life. He realizes, without any doubt whatever, that there is *neither gain nor loss* to any one at any time. The death of the body, he knows, does not affect the sovereign nature of the Soul within it. To meet the sorrow caused by the body's fall, he has the infallible strength derived from the Soul. Self-knowledge preserves in him a kind of balance, evenness and harmony, which the others lack as a rule.

With his lofty outlook, he becomes compassionate and is ready to help the others whenever they are in distress. But unless specifically asked for, he will not reveal himself before the others. Krishna himself provides the best example for the *stita-dhee's* model behaviour. The way he speaks to Arjuna in the battlefield illustrates the truth even more.

Sri Krishna the Example

In fact, Krishna has done so before many others too, in different situations. The last instance of his life is quite spectacular. He lived in the world for one hundred and twenty-five years, without feeling any affliction or resentment. The Gods of the Heavens were getting agitated that their Lord was not thinking of departing from the world. And, therefore, headed by Brahma, the Creator, they came down to appeal before Sri Krishna and get Him back to their own midst.

Coming to know of this, Uddhava, the trusted minister and chosen devotee, felt extremely miserable. Thinking that his beloved Master would leave the earth soon, he became restless and was unable to contain his grief. So he went to the Lord and begged of him with tears:

> "My dear Lord, I understand your intention is to depart from the earth, leaving all of us behind. I,

> due to my long, intimate association with you, am not able to stand your separation even for half a second. Therefore, I pray, O Lord, take me to where you go, and deliver me from the affliction scorching my heart."

On hearing Uddhava's submission, Krishna takes up the task of assuaging his heart. Speaking affectionately, inspiring him with timely words of Wisdom and illumining his intelligence, Krishna enabled him to withstand the separation. It was this Gospel, called Uddhava Gita, the Last Message of Sri Krishna, that I discussed during the earlier morning sessions at Subramanian's house in Hauz Khas.

Try to examine the episode closely. How can a seeker of Truth be so attached to a Knower, his teacher? Will there be a love so wholesome and moving as Uddhava's, by which the human mind gets enfeebled? Where lies its hidden source? What makes one an object of such deep endearingness as Krishna is? Why people in general are not blessed with such a graceful note of love, friendship, submission and compassion?

Love, by its very nature, is *lovable*. Its endearing quality is what makes even a 'cruel' man relish and pursue it in front of the severest obstructions. Maybe, due to its lofty character, it is rarely available to mankind. However, the benefits of true love cannot be denied to any one, provided he or she is worthy of them. When the seeker of Yoga finally lands in the *stita-prajna* state, the blessedness which permeates takes his mind to extraordinary heights, making him feel a strong sense of oneness with all.

Oneness and the New Relationship

Finding a new position for himself, he feels inspired to love more, suffer and enjoy more on the others' account. This is what leads him to outlive the family status and become a society man, a nation man, nay a world man. He thinks his life is as much for the others' sake as for his own and his family's. This is not a denial, but a greater acceptance. The expansion is quite marked, pronounced, manifest. It engulfs him much more than he thinks he can allow himself.

In the case of some, this note of development becomes too supreme. It is the Knowers of this group who suddenly rise up and begin to shine, like a meteor, in their new splendour. As a father will feel for his children, they now start feeling for the people at large. Their hearts radiate a deep note of love for all alike, a concern for as many persons as they can possibly foster, a prompting to ensure the welfare of all.

This is no wonder. The ordinary father is motivated and moved by his blood. But the Knower is guided by the truth of his spirituality, the realization it brings. Naturally, his affectionate attitude evokes a widespread response from various sections of people. A sense of strong relationship grows in him. All this is due to the *anabhi-snehatwa* his *stita–prajna* samadhi gives rise to.

Normally, the children born to you will alone call you 'father'. For anyone, there is only one father, and for a father, those born of his blood alone are the sons and daughters. For the Saint, however, the situation is different. He ceases to be the blood-father and begins to live as the heart-father, the mind-father, the father of the 'Spirit' of men and women.

The bond of relation you have with your parents is inborn, not optional. But the fatherhood you bestow upon a Saint, and the sonhood you derive from him, both are purely optional. In fact, that is the only relationship we wilfully adopt and preserve with love, determination and purpose. The real Saint can become a Father, and the process, unlike that of the blood-father, goes on till his body falls. Generally, as the Saint grows older, he will be better and more widely known. Naturally, the people who seek his feet also increase in number and variety. The Saints of this country are known and honoured the world over. Many of them continue to provide inspiration even after their bodies have fallen. Sages Vyasa and Vasishta are peerless examples of this kind. Remaining single, the true Saint becomes a father to an endless number of people!

Fatherhood Five Kinds

There is a celebrated Sanskrit verse, a *Subhashita*, in which the various fathers an individual can have are described:

अन्नदाता भयत्राता यश्च कन्यां प्रयच्छति ।
विद्याप्रदो मन्त्रदश्च पञ्चैते पितरः स्मृताः ॥

Anna-daata bhaya-traata yascha kanyaam prayacchati
Vidyaa-prado mantra-dascha panchaite pitarah smritaah

> The one who feeds you, who redeems you from fear, who gives you a girl in marriage, who teaches you his knowledge, who initiates you into the mystic religious syllables and formulae; these five are equally to be considered as 'fathers'.

The import is clear. It teaches mankind a lot. While every one is born of a couple, his life cannot be promoted, enriched or fulfilled by them alone. They are his parents only to a degree. Bodily, they alone are the parents. But he is not the body alone. The body exists only to serve the needs of the mind, heart and intelligence. And, therefore, his blood-parents cannot pose to be the parents in full. Our mind begins to grow after the birth of our body. The growth goes on indefinitely. Even the *stita-prajna* culture and outcome, is a growth in our mind and intelligence. Of such a growing mind, who indeed can be the 'single' father?

It is in such a context that the Saint is called the 'father' of the seeker. In our culture, tradition and behaviour, the epithet 'father' goes liberally with the Saint. To be blessed to be called 'father' by one, through his option, motivated by the call of the spirit, is a great privilege. Equally, to be regarded as the 'son' by a Saint is an invaluable honour and cherished wish for a seeker. As Sankara says in *Vivekachoodamani*:

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतत् देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥ V–2

> Three are the gains rarely had in this earth—to be born a human; to be fired with the urge of seeking Truth; and then to be graced by the nourishing care of a Mahaapurusha, the Saint.

The Beauty of Spirituality

The whole beauty lies in the growth and expansion *stita-prajnata* works in the seeker's mind and intelligence, as a result of which he becomes an *anabhi-snehah*. The sight of a son or daughter pleases you, the father. If one son or one daughter does give you so much of delight, can you measure the delight bestowed upon the Saint by the large number of his sons and daughters? For the ordinary man, perhaps to delight over the fortunes of even the neighbour is hard. What to speak then of rising to a still higher level of thinking? But look at the Knower. He delights over the entire world, the pet creation of his beloved Lord, of whom he feels, he is a dear son. The thought of love, dearness, friendliness and oneness saturates his heart so fully and well that the very same current fills him with ceaseless joy.

You are born of several parents. Many of you have grown to be parents yourselves. Yet, looking at you, seated in my front, my *fatherly* heart generates a love and joy which far surpasses perhaps that of all of you. Have you thought as to what is the secret which binds you, the listeners, and me the feeder of your ears and hearts, like this, in an unharming beautiful bond of affinity and delight? The truth is self-evident!

The blood and matrimonial relationships are strong, no doubt. Nature's forces are constantly at work to preserve them in mankind. For every one they are useful, delightful and indispensable. But you should not think that the human beings are capable of achieving these, and these alone. The same Nature, working through still subtler laws which operate in the deeper layers of our own being, can give rise to a much loftier kind of relationship. This is accessible only to those who love the pulsations of the Soul far above the temptations of the body. Of course, that is a unique privilege, an exalted status. But surely it lies within the reach of the earnest seeker. The realization of *stita-prajnata*, as Krishna says, by means of Vedantic *vichara* and meditation, is the right means for attaining it. And all individuals have an equal claim and possibility for it.

End of the Third Day's Talk.

FOURTH DAY'S TALK

We are still in the *stita-prajna* and *stita-dhee* descriptions. Arjuna's questions were primarily four. Two of them have been answered. We discussed the answers in some length. Today we shall take up the third question: How will he (*stita-dhee*) be resting ? I have already explained the meaning and scope of this question. What we now have to understand is the answer, its message to the sadhaka, the significance it holds while shaping the effects of your meditation.

Lessons From the Tortoise

As usual, Krishna gives a very brief but exhaustive answer, citing an example to show how dexterous and facile the *stita-dhee* will be in disentangling himself from the world, its contacts :

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Ch. 2, V. 58

All of you know what a turtle or tortoise is. People see and often handle the creature in a very cruel manner. But Sri Krishna here mentions about 'him' as a significant example, to illustrate the secret of the *stita-dhee's* achievement. How does his sadhana fruition, is brought home by this example.

This is how the great mind always works. You become great, not after taking birth in a great and influential family. The birth is never our option. True greatness is to be cultivated and preserved in your own mind. How lofty are your thoughts, so elevated will your individuality be. To elevate a human is the role of his thoughts. To degenerate too is equally in the mind's own potential.

The ignorant man finds nothing of Truth, its expression, in the world around him; but the Knower traces the full display of Truth in the same world. To the deluded man, his body consists of blood, flesh, bone and air, all material and perishable. There is nothing beyond these matter forms. But the seeker and Knower glimpse within the same body a *supra*-presence, and affirm the Spiritual Reality called the Soul or Self. The entire difference lies in the perceivers, their perceptions; in the ideals they foster and pursue for the purpose.

Sri Krishna wants us to look at the turtle and imbibe a great spiritual lesson from it. The meaning of the verse is :

> Just like the *koorma* withdraws its head and limbs from all sides into the thick shell, so does the *stita-dhee* pull back his senses from the objects' connections. The intelligence of one who is able to do so will alone conduce to stability.

Extending the four legs and neck, the turtle moves about on the surface of the earth, looking around, inspecting the surroundings. The moment it senses danger, it withdraws its limbs and neck and instantly lies motionless. In that state, you can hardly recognize the creature. It looks like a piece of stone or rock. The shell on top acts as an armour of protection. The instinctiveness with which it is able to pull back and hide its limbs is very unique.

The Knower's sense-restraint must be equally automatic, says Krishna. The world and our contact with it cannot be avoided altogether. The redress is, therefore, in our ability to withdraw ourselves whenever we want, to avoid trouble and torment. Does not the turtle do so? We too should be able to!

Senses Supreme and Irreplaceable

In our personality, the senses are said to be the trouble-makers. All the attractions and repulsions we gather while interacting with persons and objects in the world, are held to be the senses' creation. And, therefore, people mostly blame the senses and plead helpless in controlling them. But is that true?

Along with the powerful senses, Nature has also equipped mankind with a discriminating intelligence. Using this intelligence, every one has a clear possibility to gain control or moderation in any facet of life. The senses on the body and the intelligence within are an ideal combination, which enables man to achieve whatever he wishes. The tendency to find fault with the senses or to seek shelter under their pretext is wrong. The unpreparedness to restrain them is the real danger. What we need is an ideal moderation, a full harmony, a sense of restraint in using our senses.

Why should there be five senses for us in our personality? Are so many needed? By their number and variety, are they not causing more trouble for mankind? Well, I would like you to reflect in this way.

Every one of the five senses has got a unique role to play. Each is sovereign in its sphere of contact. As Sankara says:

While perceiving the objects, they stimulate in the mind the powers to attract and repel us. It is not that the eyes see a colourful object—a person, a bird, a flower or an inert substance—and the process stops there. Following the sight, instantly arises either an attraction or replusion in you for that object. The object by itself does not have any such power ingrained in it. *Raaga* or *dwesha* is generated only when the object links itself with us, the perceiver, through our *indriya*. How can a flower or a stone situate at a distance, unable to move, stir our mind, causing a wave of attraction ? The attraction makes us move towards it, and not vice versa !

Hold the same flower before one whose eyes are closed, or before a blind man. Will it arouse any attraction ? So, only in conjunction with our senses, it derives the power to attract or repel. In a way this is an advantage too. However, the truth is as Krishna puts it. The senses are capable of instilling from the objects the twin-forces of *raaga* and *dwesha*. Mind you, *raaga* and *dwesha* pertain to us, not to the objects. They represent our own psychological forces, with consequences relating to us. Krishna says "do not come under their sway"—whose ? Of *raaga-dweshaas*. What and where are they ?

Raaga-dweshaas are mind-born, though aroused by the sense—objects. The trouble arises only, when following the glimpsing of objects, the power of either attraction or repulsion germinates within us. Until then, the process, interaction, is purely physical, but now suddenly it becomes emotional, psychological, relating to our mind and its working.

We speak so much religiously about *bandhana*, bondage. Have you thought clearly as to what is this bondage ? Does it exist in the body ? Bondage is the creation of the two-fold propulsion, in and by the mind, by which the human is urged to get involved inextricably in the world-pursuits. You cannot think of making any effort unless you are motivated for it. The motivation comes in the form of a mental 'becoming'. Properly analysed, it is either a preference or a prejudice. Once it has come to be, the course is difficult to arrest. Governed by our heredity, tradition, even at the time of birth, we are gripped by this twin delusions, called *iccha* and *dwesha*. And, normally speaking, every day of our life, the delusion and the efforts which follow it, are only increasing. Where is the possibility for Salvation then, except when we stop and analyse the situation?

Sense-Restraint Gita's Rarety

Krishna, therefore, emphasizes the need for exercising restraint over the senses. The role of restraint is repeatedly stressed throughout the Gita. For every unique *Sastra*—an intelligent spiritual treatise—there should be some rare feature, distinguishing it from the rest. It is called *apoorvata* (rarety) in Sanskrit. Viewed thus, the importance of sense-restraint (*indriya-niyamana*) forms the *apoorvata* of Gita. Krishna holds *indriya-nigraha* as the supreme endeavour of everyone—the man of religion, of philosophy, of ethics; of Vedanta and Devotion in particular. Where there is no sense-restraint, he says, there can be no spiritual attainment too. For *stita-prajnata* also, the determining factor is sense-restraint. "*Vase hi yasyendriyaani tasya prajnaa pratishtitaa*" are the words Krishna uses.

So it means a lot when we speak of subduing or moderating our sensory indulgences. A big havoc in our life is caused by the senses. You will sometimes find the most intelligent people very 'loose' in their *morals*. Heroic men, given to an unusually strong will, are often found to be victims of strange weaknesses. This only proves that to ally greatness in any walk of life, with a regulated and balanced personal and social behaviour, is rather hard. Human history has always shown that it is so. The standards set by our Masters for greatness are, therefore, quite rigid and classic.

Why are Saints Models?

Saints became the *model* humans in our society for this reason alone. There is a lot of difference between a Saint and a Philosopher, the professor who teaches philosophy. In one you can find the ripeness of a life-long option for purity, through dedication and restraint. In the other, it need not be so.

Why should we have evolved such a culture like Sainthood, sanyasa? Sanyasa was in full vogue even in the most ancient times. The people in our land had thought and re-thought: 'What could be the right and final ambition for a sober human mind? The usual path *of acquiring* external things was too commonplace an endeavour for them. Of course, it calls for some hard work, but it is not enough. What will it be if all such efforts are wilfully abandoned, and man tries to remain contented and fulfilled?

'Which is the superior achievement—the external gains and glory or the internal peace and contentment? Which of the two calls for greater, more lasting and assiduous application and sacrifice?

In gaining the objects of enjoyments, in gratifying our senses, there is a pleasure, even a variety of it, no doubt. But it is quite ordinary, and perhaps inescapable too. Is there any pleasure or something still finer when we leave every kind of external contacts, in an effort to conjoin ourselves with whatever is within our body, to which we get united in sleep? Can there not be a distinct pursuit aimed at capturing the Inner Throne?

Our whole civilization underwent a significant progress by questioning and probing into themselves in this manner. The great poet Bhartruhari, who was once a ruler in our land, found his life's fulfilment only by relinquishing his throne and stepping out of the palace, to lead a life of utter *tapasya* in solitude. He found a new vista of wisdom, which he has memorably brought forth in the three *satakas* (century of verses) of his, famous even to this day.

So you cannot call the ascetics, men of inferior mettle. If at all, their will and discrimination were, and are, superior and classical. Others may discredit their enrichment. But it is due to their own poverty of will and wisdom alike. The struggle of all men and women, says Gita, is underscored by the senses and the twin-forces they go on generating in the mind. Krishna then describes the process by which the senses work a man's disaster. He has a few verses to say on this plight.

How Senses Cause Havoc

The attraction and repulsion are associated with the sense objects, no doubt. But in order to arouse them, the mind, within the body, must give its sanction by close co-operation. See, young boys and girls go to school, learn, sit, walk and live together. Does the proximity generate in them any personal attraction or repulsion common to the grown up? Is it because their eyes, ears and skin do not contact their objects? I say this only to show that the sprouting of *raaga* and *dwesha* depends not solely upon the senses. Primarily it is tickled by the internal factor—the mind—its attitudes and emotions. The mere seeing of an object will not be sufficient to arouse a lingering sentiment in any one. In fact, to give oneself to such instantaneous reaction is bad. We call it *impulsiveness*, which, on any account, is deplorable. It is not the 'adult reaction', as it is popularly called. Moderation, maturity, and sobriety are the watchwords for sustained growth and fruition.

'Constant rumination about an object, its contact, will develop into an inner compulsion, which brings in a sense of identification or inseparability with the object', is what Krishna states. You first of all see a person young and unmarried as you are. Your mind encourages the sight, and allows it to encourage you too. And so, following the first meeting, the mind begins to ponder over him, his features, words and moods. Soon a craving takes root in you, calling for his proximity once again. That then prompts your will to get a further glimpse of the desired object. You want to persist and prevail, when you meet the person next. In the whole process, see, it is *dhyaana* (the mind's adherence, association, linking) that precedes the whole episode. This is what Krishna stresses :

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः संगस्तेषूपजायते ।

Ch. 2, V. 62

Sanga denotes the mental state, by which you feel a sense of inseparability with an object. The contact of the sense with the object grows in the mind, and the mind gets addicted and feels like getting the contact over and over again. Is this not the 'attachment' we speak of between parents and children, husband and wife, or two intimate friends ?

The clue is important. Before *sanga* develops, the rumination in the mind-level precedes. So, if you have to safeguard against any unfavourable *sanga*, what should you do ? In seeing the objects, on seeing them, as also after seeing them, be careful in choosing, selecting and avoiding. Once, without the right choice, if you indulge in any contact, and the contact has taken a firm root in the mind, you will find it extremely difficult to set it aside. The point needs clear emphasis.

Wrestling with the Mind Useless

Suppose, for any reason whatever, you have been exposed to an unpleasant sight or dialogue, it would have formed its impression in your system. The modern way of putting it is that the whole instance gets registered automatically in your brain cells. The impression, the registration, having been made, if you struggle to forget it deliberately, that very process will go to strengthen the memory. To absorb is rather easy. To eliminate is too hard, even impossible. In this light, Krishna's statements about how attachment (*sanga*) grows is very important.

To avoid the possibility of unwelcome *sanga* in your mind, the only way is to filter the contacts out, avoid them, sufficiently early. In other words, do not afford any chance for unfavourable objects to come into contact with you at all. This means, we must observe the path of 'selected acceptance' in all walks of our life. Who will select, and on what basis? Herein comes the role of the elderly people, those already grown and who are in a position to judge. In fact, the benefits of the entire preceding generations should come to our help in this sphere. Healthy traditions, noble habits, beneficial routines, all these are formed in a society after several generations have lived, learnt, verified their learning and perfected it. In this respect, the people of India are very fortunate.

I am reminded of the situation prevailing in modern India, like other countries of the world, in which the entire traditional sobriety is sabotaged in the name of progressive civilization. Damaging sights through advertisement boards and placards, slogans and the like put up by movie producers and display houses are very common on the road side and public places. Even if you want to avoid seeing them, you cannot. The visual interaction will have long-lasting effects, consequences, whether we recognize the causal factors in time or not. Nature's laws and our personality's mechanisms will do their work, even if we are ignorant of them. "Ignorance of law is no excuse for a crime"!

I know of several persons who come to me and say: "Swamiji, I had paid no heed to what my elders said. I did not keep the right type of friends. Getting into bad company, I did many a wrong act. All these together devoured my young age. I began to realize the harm only recently. How much I wish my children be spared my fate, which is verily a curse..."

The trouble is that by becoming awakened to your moral and ethical lapses so late like this, you alone can be benefited. May be, the remaining part of your life will be improved. But that does not solve the basic problem connected with the birth of your children. By that time, you may have ceased to become a father (of more children). Those already born could only draw from the cells in the then-existing body of yours, which implies a complex possibility ! This is how the wrong situations prevail and continue inextricably.

By this, I am not drawing a gloomy picture of the society. I only point out the darker sides, merely for the sake of revealing the true state of affairs. There must be at least individual benefits, though not massive. And that is how our society, through individual and exclusive interests and dedication, has given birth to exceptionally great moral, ethical, religious and philosophical men and women in all ages. One such individual will shed his or her influence over a large number of the society, and thus the law of social redemption and promotion is at work concurrently. Nature strikes Her balance in Her own way ! The thinkers have ground, therefore, to console themselves.

The Sequence of Ruin

The repeated sensory associations, *sanga*, grows strong in the mind. Once this happens, the individual is exposed to great risk, says Krishna. The *sanga* often ripens into passion or greed. That when impeded—and it is always likely to be so—bursts forth into tension and anger. What can follow anger is too well known to all of you. Sometimes, in a fit of temper, man even kills, maybe, a friend or relative of his. The process is subjective, very subtle and quick. What is first aroused is an emotional urge. The nature of emotion changes. And then it overpowers the brain and its functions. The sense of discrimination, evaluation, is suspended instantaneously. The most henous crime ensues.

While healthy emotions are creative in nature, the others are equally destructive. But all these are to be traced to the indulgence of our senses and the impact the process makes in the mind.

So, for leading a regulated and moderate life, you must keep a surveillance over your senses. Do not encourage them to over-indulge or indulge indiscreetly. Every old and enriched society must, in its family, social and national levels, have some tested and proven moral, ethical and spiritual norms. Better recognise their place and worth, and adopt them for your sake, to avoid pitfalls and dangers in your life and your children's.

A question now arises: In order to control the senses, what is the effective means? What about 'denying' the senses their contacts? In other words "shall we starve the senses"? To explain it better: Suppose you have a strong weakness for the palate, which calls for sumptuous meals in large quantity; and you want to get over the excessive habit of eating! What should be done? Is the solution one of avoiding tasty meals, or eating too less, or starving every alternate day? By doing this, the defect will not be removed.

In the case of a typhoid patient, the tongue gets fully coated. His taste disappears. Appetite is lost. And the problem is to make him eat the permissible items. But soon after he recovers, all the lost appetite reappears with added vigour, and he is unable to control himself. This clearly proves that excessive sensory pull is not to be treated with total denial or suppression. If you control the senses by not giving them their objects to contact, interact with; they will be obliged to remain submissive. But that is like imprisoning a criminal forcefully. The motivation for the senses springs from the psychological structure of ours. The craving is mental. That has to be treated at its source. When the craving becomes extinct in the mind, then alone will you be safe!

Dip the Mind in the Self

Sri Krishna says that external control does not impede the process of sensory attractions. Leaving the mind-forces intact, the control acts on the external plane alone. When will the mind-agitation caused by craving disappear? The redemption is, says Krishna, in *param drishtwaa* (verse 59). The mind has to be led to the contact with the Self. It has to be sunk in the *stita-prajna* samadhi. There it gets the opportunity to lie submerged in the blissfulness of Consciousness. Let it bathe again and again in the graceful and soothing waters of the Self. Every time it does so, a corresponding measure of *sanga* will also vanish from it.

So all forms of sadhana must be to subserve the *stita-prajnata,* the meditation meant for it. To abstain from the sense-operation is not the way then. To be abstemious, to be indulging but moderately, subjecting the process to a refined sense of balance is the ideal. That is how the traditional ideals and standards for food, its quality and quantum; for sleep, its timing and regulation; for fast, its duration; for marriage, its selection and organization; all have been evolved by the civilized societies of the world.

However, the supreme point is that the senses are merely to subserve the mind. Unless the sensory pulls are regulated when they begin actual expression, indulgence, by treating the mind through *viveka*—the lessons of the intellect—the desired improvement and progress cannot be. Moreover, for the mind, the right treatment will be to expose it to the potentials of the Self by giving an opportunity to experience the Self-state, the *stita-prajna* samadhi. There is no other short cut.

The moderation must be all–fold, in the sense that all the senses must be equally tamed. Generally, in everyone, one or two of the five senses alone will be powerful. For all alike, the tongue and the skin are said to be the most trouble-some and long-standing too. Skin through the genital organ, and tongue through food, has been tormenting mankind almost for ever. Even when the skin retires in its mission, the tongue will continue. Even to the last day, the tongue can work its harm. Whichever sense is powerful in you should be handled with discernment. Be exposed to the Vedantic *viveka*, and pursue the path of *stita-prajna*. That is the only source of relief.

Regulation the Best Formula

Is it possible to have moderation of this kind, and yet be effective in our life and pursuits? I must say, our pursuits will be effective only with the practice of moderation. Everywhere, I have found the important sections of the society talking about 'impulsiveness versus moderation'. The intellectuals have only one problem—to tame their impulsive nature, and to establish and preserve a deep note of moderation. In fact, in selected interviews for all kinds of vocation, what is looked for is intelligence, integrity and non-impulsiveness. The 'head' man always wins over the 'muscle'-man. Even in our body, biologically, the brain rules the muscles. For the heart and lungs to work, the brain must give its impetus. Sri Krishna clearly says:

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

Ch. 2, V. 64

> One who allows his senses to move amidst the objects, ensuring constantly that the mind is rid of *raaga* and *dwesha*, its usual enemies, thereby proving his control over the mind and its damaging emotions, certainly achieves inner composure.

As a matter of fact, if you sit in a house or a hermitage without doing any activity at all, the mind will grow restless. That is why, many of the ascetics adopting that path, sometimes from young age, develop habits like smoking *ganja*. Their body is normal, nourishment also is somewhat normal. How will the energy generated be expended? In the name of asceticism, they keep quiet, thinking that shunning activities alone implies ascetic merits. But the mind calls for activity. The senses are denied the scope. A tussle results. It becomes a constant tug-of-war! How to come over the crisis? Take in something by which drowsiness is induced. Is this an intelligent approach, one in tune with Nature, Her needs and provisions?

Activity Indispensable

The truth is that by activity alone the mind will be put into its emotional expressions. Give a scope for the mind, and when the mind expresses itself, remove from it, from its expression, whatever is unwelcome, excessive. The mind is not a bad product. It does not cause harm every time. Only the twin forces of *raaga* and *dwesha*, when coupled with the working of the mind will bring forth dejections, grief and fear.

So like removing the poison from a cobra, remove only the venomous content from the mind. When *raaga* and *dwesha* stand dissolved or eliminated, the mind will be found to be extremely sweet, entertaining and fulfilling. You will be able to laugh at the harmful thoughts of your enemy. You will start cherishing even the misfortunes, failures and adversities in your life. Pursue *stita-prajnata*, and then will you realize its sweetness and promise.

To conclude the discussion for today: What you need is moderation, restraint in life, in every level and phase of it. So far as the senses are concerned, recognizing their useful role and also their damaging potentials, try to gain an intelligent and discriminating supervision over their indulgences. The way to achieve it is by 'treating the mind', which alone provides motivation for the senses to do their work. The treatment is the systematic feeding of the Vedantic and the *stita-prajna* truths. If you do so, the mind will become nobler and gentler; the quietness, serenity settling in it will gradually become deep and continuous. In such a state, the senses will be automatically subdued. No more restless, they will be extremely useful and rewarding.

The sadhana, on reaching the culmination, will give you a mastery resembling that of the *koorma*, turtle. I have already explained the illustration. Keep the *koorma* in mind, as the ideal you should work for. Hindus speak of so many Incarnations or Descents of God. The *Dasaavataaras* are very famous. The *koorma* comes as the second of the ten. The whole of creation affords us a variety of lessons if only we have the keenness to observe and learn from them. In the Uddhava Gita, as some of you have heard, Sri Krishna, through the story of an *Avadhoota*, speaks of 24 Teachers, among whom inert things, half-sentient and fully sentient entities, all have an esteemed place. So let us learn from everywhere, everything. Through the *stita–prajna* discussion of the Gita, our lesson from the *turtle* will be the most enriching one on sensory restraint.

We shall see more of the theme tomorrow.

End of the Fourth Day's Talk.

FIFTH DAY'S TALK

Today is the last of this five-day session, and you know what it means. The subject is the *stita-prajna*, and the task is to become like him inspite of our life of worldly activity. The path must be clear to you all, in view of the descriptions of the *Stita-prajna* and *Stita-dhee* I gave during the past four days. For those who introspect earnestly over the themes, the effort should not prove difficult. To a degrce, I agree, the capacity of the individual counts. But then, I feel that all of you are adequately intelligent ! You lack nothing for doing the right sadhana. You have enough of worldly merits. Well, add to them this new merit too. That will make you many times better.

No Progress for the Undisciplined

Well, we have spoken enough about the need for sense-restraint, while seeking spiritual enlightenment. Krishna is very emphatic about it. He gives several verses to explain the importance of this discipline. In the absence of 'control', you cannot adopt and preserve the *Yoga-buddhi*. That is to say, the *buddhi* will not adopt and preserve the idea of equalness, evenness—*samata*. It will not pursue stability and equipoise as the ultimate gain. The Yoga proposition not making the right appeal, it will not adhere to it steadfastly. Krishna, therefore, says:

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिः अशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

Ch. 2, V. 66

> For the uncontrolled, the Yoga thoughts will not be stable. Nor can contemplation be effective for him. For the uncontemplative, how can quietness be? To the unquiet and disturbed, how can contentment ever be?

Each statement has got its relevance and application. The summary of them all will be that the whole *stita-prajna* sadhana is based upon the integration of our propensities, potentials and pursuits. Beginning from the bodily level, the sadhaka should aim at regulating his sensory indulgence, as well as toning down the mind's incorrect urges. Then, by devout contemplation, he should try to gain a 'balanced' mind. That alone will make him contented and poised. Restraint, discipline and moderation are the habits to be counted upon.

How is Viveka Robbed

Indriyas, says Krishna, have the potential to cause havoc at any stage. Out of the five, one is sufficient to pull the mind down and force a debacle. So, whenever such a tendency is noticed, you must, with discrimination, dissuade yourself sternly. As I said earlier, the skin and the tongue are the constant trouble-makers. For the young, the weakness for sex can work unimaginable danger. Once the attraction is entertained and encouraged, the entire reason will subside, inducing you to argue in favour of the attraction.

Some individuals come to me and say how addicted they are to seeing movies, despite their religious fervour. Addiction to smoke and liquor is also common. Just as a sudden adverse wind turns the boat away in water, the turbulent sense will drag the mind and rob a man's *viveka*, to cause untold harm.

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि॥

Ch. 2, V. 67

"Therefore, Arjuna, to become a *Stita-dhee*, the senses must be under control. *Indriya-vyaapaara* must be orderly. By adopting regulation, stability must be achieved. Otherwise, one cannot succeed in steadying his consciousness (in samadhi). His subjective potential will not reveal itself. He will be unable to check his thoughts and emotional urges. In restraint is the whole spiritual success."

Knower and Non-Knower Contrasted

Now comes the much-misunderstood statement about the *stita-prajna*, to summarize the whole enunciation so far :

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः॥

Ch. 2, V. 69

The literal meaning of the verse is : In that, which is night to all beings, keeps awake the Self-realized Yogi. That, in turn, is the night for the Knower, in which are wakeful the others in general.

Can you grasp the essence of the message conveyed ? The contrast between the Knower and the non-Knower is brought home by the two words 'night' and 'day' : Keeping awake, but not seeing; keeping unawake, but seeing well. What the people en mass do, the Seer does not; and what he does, the others refrain from doing. Maybe it is too intricate; I shall explain the relevance.

Imagine, the Gita transpired at a time when electricity was not in use. There was no shift-working, as we have now. Sun was the only common light, enabling mankind to move freely and work. When the sun set, the active day also ended. People returned to their homes, awaiting the sun-rise to begin their work the next day. Thus, night meant all-round darkness and inability to see and move. So, the 'night' of the commoner denotes that situation in which they are not able to see properly. Their vision gets robbed.

Apply this to the common man's understanding. Normally, people see only with their eyes. For the eye to see, external light is needed. And it sees only the outside things. To the ordinary people, thus, the external world alone gives light, variety and perception. Anything beyond this is verily imperceptible to them. Suppose you tell them : "The external is not the 'all'. The matter-body contains a supra-matter spirit, of which the external world is a mere offshoot, a limited projection. The world's root, source and support is the Spirit. No object can derive its status except from a subject. The subject exists inwardly. It is within the body, as it is within the world, and vice versa.

"This subject is independent. It exists by itself. The object is not so. You say 'I' first, and then alone proceeds your seeing or hearing. Even if no act is done, 'you' will be there. The actor is independent of the action. Action is only an expression of the actor.

"The object world is thus dependent. Its subject is the independent being. Look into the Subject within your body. It forms an immeasurable expanse, far greater than the one you see outside. The whole objectivity is a projection; subjectivity is the Reality. The Self, the 'I' is that lofty Subject. You are verily That, the sentient Seer; not this seen, insentient body..."

Will not words of this kind be 'Greek' to the common man? For him perceptions can only be through the senses. He cannot go beyond the senses, or think of anything inward to them as their cause. "When I close my eyes, I see nothing. At least, with eyes open, I can see darkness, when there is no light. Even such darkness, I don't see inside the body ! What then is the Soul ? Your words are meaningless to me......" This is how he reacts.

See the reaction of the common man, and the realization of the Knower. The commoner can think of the Self only in the background of what he sees outside. And so, the internal Reality becomes a 'myth' for him. The Knower, in full contrast, is unable to think of the exterior except as a trifling shadow, an ephemeral display of the inner Subject. If the world is endless, its endlessness, the Knower says, is founded upon the unbounded might of the Consciousness ! Imagine then how extensive and transcendent the Self must be ! Well, that is, then the Knower's sheet anchor, and he afirms, it is the world's too. Will the average man, agree with the Knower ?

In other words, to close the eyes, and yet be enraptured by something invisible present within the mass of the body, sounds ridiculous for the ordinary mortals. Even if they admit the possibility, they will plead utter inability to strive for it. All their pursuits, successes and fulfilment lie within the world, with what the world gives and takes.

But to the one with *indriya-nigraha*, the emphasis lies elsewhere. He calls that life alone effective and meaningful, in which the

Spirit stands realized and contentment subjectivized. With eyes closed, activities suspended, external contacts eliminated, the Seer gains his entry into the Self's domain, whereas the others do just the opposite. Are not then the two in strict mutual variance ? Where one wakes up, the other sleeps; when one is asleep, then is the other wakeful !

The sphere delighting the worldly man does not charm the Knower. The Subject, which draws the Knower in, giving him joy and clarity, deludes and repels the commoner, making him feel shaky and reluctant. The Knower's insight is shaped by the Self, and he evaluates the world on its merits. The man of the world, tied firmly to the world, deluded by its display, wants to assess the 'unseen' entity called the Self on the basis of the senses' reading.

The values and visions of the two are thus mutually opposite. This is the summary of Krishna's statement. Interpret the simile further in your own light. The truth must now be clear to you.

The Zenith of Spiritual Attainment

Now, we shall pass on to the last three verses of the chapter. These, together with the previous one, answer Arjuna's fourth question: "How will the *stita-dhee* move about ?" His movement will, of course, be not in the manner of the others. Though interacting outwardly, he will always be tuned within, anchored deeply, refusing to swerve or be shaken. Krishna describes his unassailable position thus:

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

Ch. 2, V. 70

The simile used in this verse has many-fold applications. Normally, there is a general notion that the Spiritual Man becomes unproductive and ineffective to the world's objectives. But that is utterly baseless. "Moving about" obviously implies regular activity on his part. Moreover, the scope and capacity in his case will be many times more.

As an ordinary individual, just like the others, he already had the usual merits and experiences. Enlightened and exceptionally stable and composed as he is now, a variety of new merits grace him. Naturally his abilities to work, create, sustain and promote will be enhanced. His potentials fully revealed, he achieves Great things. With no drawbacks to his lot, his super-powers shine all the more, making him exemplary in every way. No wonder then that Krishna describes him "*aascharyavat*", meaning wonderful, exalted, rare, magnificent. The people around regard him so, out of their own hearts' compulsions.

Why is it so? Because his inner dimensions have increased enormously. 'His expansive outlook verily resembles the sea. He becomes so deep and vast, accepting and accommodating, giving as well as taking' says Krishna. It is such a grand change that transpires in the Knower, by virtue of his *spiritual becoming*.

Normally, what is the way people look at the sea? Like the tortoise, Krishna makes the 'sea' an exquisite spiritual example. Many stand on the shores of the sea. The roaring waves, the sparkling waters, the rising and setting sun, all these perhaps move them with admiration. Yet this is the usual dimension of admiring Nature, Her greatness. We want something more, to be great. The sea should speak to us like a teacher, an unparalleled guide, training us to resolve our problems, answering our needs which are hard to meet. Well, what is the key for such a splendid insight?

Spiritual expositions have always a unique role. Whatever is otherwise revealed, through science and allied branches of knowledge, the spiritual science will not take up. That which the others are unable to enlighten, is alone the distinct field for spirituality. The senses will reveal the *pratyaksha* (evident) truths. The *apratyaksha* (inscrutable) category alone is then the choice subject of spiritual perception, intuition. This characteristic is explicit in Krishna's illustration. Krishna is singular even in drawing examples, citing illustrations.

The *stita-prajna* samadhi and the insight it stimulates should provide a breadth of outlook, a resillience, an unassailability, like that of the sea, says Krishna. What does he mean?

The Three Human Dimensions

The ordinary men and women have the *well*–dimension or at best the *tank*–dimension within them. Born in a family, grow, ing in a limited circle, exposed to the blood and matrimonial relations, they pass through their parenthood to gather the same pattern of experiences. The course is customary, common, right from immemorial times. In other words, like the well or tank, it remains limited, circumscribed.

The rarer ones of mankind, somehow, with loftier thoughts and broader pursuits, gain the river's status. The river flows on and on, providing water for drinking as well as irrigation, until it terminates in the sea. The thinkers, writers, reformers and poets, benefiting several generations of people, belong to this category.

These are the two models a normal society has in stock. For them, the motivation comes from the perceptions and delights of the senses alone. At best they appreciate Nature, as one does his parents or grand-parents. Their search, progress and fruition strictly lie within the ken of senses, the extension called the world and objects.

But is this the ultimate? Take a look at the extremeties of the world. The solid earth is surrounded by the gaseous air. And the air has a still rarified associate—the ether. The story is the same if you reach the yonder planets and bodies, which have a similar mass or make-up.

The facts about 'surroundings' are common to all heavenly bodies, including our earth. Can solidity or grossness then have more than a mere fractional place in the constitution of the universe? Naturally, what will the ultimate substance in the universe-compound be? As intelligent humans, unlike animals should we not think beyond the elements, of something greater and subtler, in which alone our world can have its Original Cause? As lovers and seekers of knowledge, equipped to gain and rejoice in wisdom, are we not obliged to make a fundamental research, evaluation?

The spiritual seeker, as I said earlier, cannot stop content with the sensory thrills. The senses are meant to expose the world outside, true. Following their exposure, the intelligence must begin its accredited pursuit. Until he is able to reach a final and useful solution, the thinking man will not rest. That is how the seeker of Truth looks to where all the other perceptions have ceased, unable to proceed further. As the Upanishads say:

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

Yato vaacho nivarttante apraapya manasaa saha.

He cannot go beyond the range of the senses outwardly. The objective scientists too cannot, they say. Nevertheless, the ambition to trace the Beyond, the inspiration and compulsion for it, is irresistible. So he plunges into the orbit lying within the senses' range, and the process then results in the spiritual meditation and samadhi we have spoken so much about. It is not a counter to what the senses see, but a complement to what they have seen. The search is to discover the inner horizon, for, from there alone the senses derive their power to perceive, into which their reports flow, to remain absorbed, and to re-emerge when called.

By such an exploration, the spiritual seeker generates an additional dimension, perhaps the last possible, in himself. The *stita-prajna* samadhi and the subsequent *stita-dhee* growth are founded upon such a life of inner research and evolution. Naturally, it is bound to produce some rare embellishments for him.

Sea-likeness the Acme

And so, rising above even the 'river' dimension, his mind and heart reach the most expansive level by which he resembles the sea. His perception becomes deep and penetrating. He finds an anchor so deep that nothing can shake him. He has matured and progressed so much that he welcomes and assimilates any 'river' that flows on to his life, starting from any level, and passing through all kinds of vicissitudes on the way. The water may be dirty and repulsive, or clean and holy. He lets them be what they are, and he, for himself, remains what he is !

Everything—be it an event, individual, action or outcome, he takes freely to his bosom. Neither resentment nor bitterness surges in his mind. The water of the rivers meeting the waters of the sea—is it not a meeting in identity, of similar entities having parted once, joining now to become what they originally were; may be to part again, only to let the course of Nature express itself unhinderedly?

Look a little deeper. On the one hand, heated by sun's rays the sea water rises as vapour. Blown by winds, meeting a variety of fates in the hands of earth's atmosphere, the vapour finally falls as showers, resulting in the emergence of rivers from mountain tops. The topography of earth gives them varied courses, all converging in the same waters, from where they rose up first.

Well, this is the way the *stita-dhee* also looks at the course of *Life*, and whatever it fetches, from wheresoever. No extent of the world's inflow, however varied and disturbing, will unsettle him. Like the sea, his depth of outlook, vastness of perception, above all, the stability of the Self, keeps him undisturbed, allowing the whole phenomena to dissolve into his within. Having gained the intrinsic freedom, he remains Himself, never more to be flooded by the life's torrents! This is the 'sea' magnitude of the human soul.

The Intelligence, Five Kinds

Incidentally, let me speak of the five different kinds of man's intelligence. The lowest kind is called *mrit-buddhi*, earthern intellect. To fix a nail in the earth is quite easy. It is easier to pull it out too. The earthern intellect, likewise, absorbs a fact quickly, only to forget it soon! Knowledge does not stay in it for long.

The next is the wooden intelligence (*kaashta-buddhi*), into which nailing is hard. But once hammered in, the nail does not come out easily. This category of people absorb information slowly, with difficulty, but after learning, it remains without change and improvement. Unable to add, delete and make timely adjustments, their learning sometimes becomes a double-edged sword.

The third is the *silaa-buddhi*, granite intelligence. To split open a rock, the craftsman fixes chisels into two or three holes in a row and hammers them in succession. The rock splits all along the length. This intellect too understands the points presented and develops them into a string of knowledge. This group of people are able to add to what they learn.

Is there anything superior? The *venu-buddhi* (bamboo intellect) works still better. Splitting two or three holes, if you separate the two halves of a bamboo, the whole length gets split open. A line of thinking fed into this type of intellect takes firm root and extends itself. But it is still a length-wise development. There is no width, breadth.

And so we want something still finer, more penetrating, which is likened with oil (*thaila-buddhi*).

Pour a drop of oil on the waters of a tank, and it begins to spread, until the whole surface is covered. In this way, people of this kind are able to develop an idea, absorb it, spread it in all the necessary directions, to make around it a wholesome proposition, fundamental and absolute. They are the ones to become the immortal 'thinkers' of the world. Remaining single, their minds expand to become the collective mankind. They evolve codes taking all people into account at every stage. In everything they show an enormous width, an immeasurable depth, a supreme height, and a matchless expanse.

Senses Important and Useful

Well, Sri Krishna is refering to such a sterling quality when he describes the *Stita-dhee* as the ideal of mankind. So, you must grow so well that remaining in the world (upon the earth like the sea), you will welcome whatever comes from the world (from the earth, through rivers). Resenting nothing, avoiding addiction, shedding undue preferences and therefore freed from prejudices, steeped in stability and hence graced with contentment, you must live and move in the world, from which you are born, and with which you interact. The world and you must become One, and the 'sense of identity' must prevail and protect your vision every time.

Neither the senses nor their objects, nor again their interaction is bad any time. As I said, all these are our help, guidance and source of illumination. The greed (*kaama*) to possess the objects, is what constricts the mind and keeps the intelligence under pressure So avoid *kaama*, to refine the mind. Let the refined mind and the regulated senses move freely, like children, in the world. Do not fight with the senses; remove merely the desire and greed, from the mind. For that, do not hate the objects, but bathe the mind often in *stita-prajnata*, until the *stita-dhee* quality is stabilized. Think, reflect, introspect, meditate and dissolve the mind's functions; all this to become better, stabler, deeper, nobler and loftier. Unshakeable you should become. Fulfilled you must be. This is the sure path of growth, expansion and fruition.

Dear souls, it is not through narrowness and denial that the individuality grows to its desired levels. Through right understanding, aided by purity, guided by refinement, processed through contemplation; finally discovering the Ultimate Substance within, will any human rise to his or her earmarked level of development. Here Krishna has shown Arjuna, through him to all of us, the blessed course of such a potent and effective growth. It is for you to grasp it properly, in its own light and worth.

Never think that to live is an ordeal, to be active is a curse, or that the world is a torment. Everything is right and helpful, if only you can look at each with wisdom and creativity. By not using any part of the body, that part will become useless, redundant. I was told that some of the birds of New Zealand and the Artic region do not know to fly, because they have no enemies!

The Right Assessment

Think of our own brain. If you don't use it properly for its functions of knowing, analysing and discovering, it will lose its present value and importance. We are told of the difference between the male and female intelligences. The females, it is said, have not been using their brain power for ages properly. May be, refusing to play their significant domestic role, they will hereafter usurp the positions of men deliberately, and after ages, rise even superior to men!

So accept life and the world, the senses and their role, the mind and its full dimensions, in toto. Regard them all as the best and the most beneficial 'instruments' for use. Utilize each in its sphere effectively, and achieve the much desired Universality. That is the golden path for fulfilment.

Do not be lethargic in leaving the customary delusions, sectarian outlooks. Install, in their place, the grand vision of evenness, oneness. Oneness is a practice for the mind, to allay and outlive its divisional, extremist standpoints. There is no oneness in the world outside. Elementally, physically, chemically, biologically, the whole existence is plural. It has been and has to be so. But in the 'source' level, the 'substance' level, everything in the universe is One! So psychologically, we should not foster plurality. Let the mind and intelligence be given to equal-vision. Enjoy the beauty, grace and elixir this 'vision' generates and be promoted and fulfilled in this very life.

In spite of *loka-vyavahaara* (worldly pursuits), Sri Krishna says, the seeker can maintain his peace and stability intact:

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमान् चरति निस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

Ch. 2, V. 71

Pumaan charati nisprihah—he who moves about freely, devoid of cravings. Not to be moving is not the solution. Move and work in the world, but avoid the cause for bondage in its hands. The trouble should be fought where exactly it shoots forth. "Arjuna, be poised to fight the subjective enemy, namely desire. That fight is no interference with any one. It is a gradual process of elimination. By re-modelling your values and ideals, the delusion should vacate the mind, and allow harmonious perception to emerge. By its very nature, the outcome is peaceful, noble, leading to transcendence and immortality. Work for it. May victory be yours......"

"So, never be afraid of the worldly life or the consequences it brings. The world will cause trouble only when your mind craves for its objects. Do not perpetuate wants. Let things come as they do. To desire is to invite bondage. In the non-desiring mind, freedom emanates like a spring. Let the world encircle you, but let your mind be anchored in spiritual wisdom.

You have not desired to fight this war. Yet you are led to fight. Do not crave for victory, yet victory will crown you. This is a secret, but nevertheless the truth. Realize it.''

Herein lies the clue to eliminate *mamata* (mine-ness). the notion which ties you to a set of things. Feel that you are His, whose is the entire world. Your relations will automatically then be the same Person's or the Power's. Dissolve the wrong notion in the right one. And enjoy the peace of freedom—the deliverance from the clutches of the mind's *maya*.

Last Stage Development

Now comes the last verse, which summarizes the last-stage-development of Knowledge and the Knower. Krishna describes it as *Braahmee stiti*; a new phrase, naturally suggesting a new import too:

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यां अन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥

Ch. 2, V. 72

Krishna began with '*aatmani eva aatmanaa tushtah*'. The basis provided was the Self. *Atma* always denotes that which is inmost in oneself, in every entity, acting as the source of awareness and knowledge. You cannot point to the Self except in relation to someone. For gaining *stita-prajnata*, one should compose his mind and dissolve its functions. The dissolving process will take him inevitably to the *Source*. It is not that you discover the Self first, and then dissolve the mind-functions into It. Try first to dissolve the mental functions, *mano-vrittis*, and then, by implication, the Self will have been embraced. Thereafter, your perception becomes 'independent' of the mind and its functions. Self-perception will precede, and the effort of contemplation will follow.

The *stita-prajna* sadhana, begun with absorption into the Self to remain contented, gradually outlives that phase. Interaction with the world and the new culture of transcending *sukha-duhkhas*, to remain unshakeable naturally follow. Activity which was earlier viewed as wrong, hindering samadhi, the Knower now begins to view it as right, helpful. The spiritual insight grows automatically. Qualities of the Knower gain more and more ground, and the 'sea' magnitude is accomplished. Once this has taken place, the Knower will no more localise his realization, or want any particular sitting for meditation.

Progress from Atman to Brahman

The *Atmic* thought, specifying the Reality as internal, inmost in the body, expands itself to be *Braahmic* thought. By *Brahman* is meant the Universal Reality, Reality in the universal magnitude. It is like the centre of a circle, previously identified as a point, now expanding to form the circle itself.

As *centre* it was a point, specfic in its dimension. But now as the circular expanse, it is no more so. Everywhere in the circle there is a point. It is all points together that form the expanse called the circle. To draw the circle, you need the point, the centre. But once the circle is drawn and completed, you can dispense with the centre. Nothing can undo the circle; it is complete, full, whole and perfect.

When you sought *stita-prajnata*, you had to 'hold on' to the centre, the point. But now, remaining there, you have cultured your perception, increased it to the universal magnitude. Having attained this dimension, the lower ranges have no more validity. The lower dimensions had simply helped you to think of the beyond, that is all. You will no more need to have the *stita-prajna* samadhi, get tied to the Self in the body. Samadhi or no samadhi, meditation or no meditation, control or free expression, withdrawal or activity; you can never go out of the 'universal orbit', nor can the Ultimate Reality get away from you. You are as firm and non-moving, though fully pulsating, as the Grand Universe itself!

The Poise of Deliverance

'Why seek that which I already have? Why want to be that which I already am? Where can I go, and how? Which shall I be, and what for? It is all ITSELF. And that is the *am-ness* too. The *am-ness* is not separate from *is-ness*. The 'ness' is always the same. Why break it then and feel bound and sorry! Liberated is my intelligence, redeemed is my mind, redoubled is my assurance of my own immortality!

'Whatever I do, wherever I go, in whichever place I am, whether the senses work, the mind thinks, the intelligence reasons; or my awareness leaves wakefulness to sleep, suspends sleep to get into dream and dismantles dream to wake up as before, nothing can demote me; nothing can elevate me too! I am ever the full, the highest; ever-promoted, ever collected; —ever *yukta* (united), ever *mukta* (liberated)! A full-fledged Yogi I am, I have become......'

What a promising and secure position! "Arjuna, reaching this, even at the end of one's life, the human mortal attains *Brahma-nirvaana,* the release resulting in *Braahmic* merger. His body will fall, like every other's; but his 'soul' will merge in the Supreme Consciousness. Like a bottle with sea water in it, taken to a certain depth in the sea, where the bottle gets broken (even this is not an adequate simile), his body falls, while the soul, the consciousness, gets merged and becomes ONE."

Never Are You Late

So do not feel you are late, or will be even after years. Now you have heard these talks, the words of the Gita, the message of the ancient, ever-living Krishna. Sufficient! Remember them. Even at your death bed, if you are able to die with them, you will be delivered! But, wise men and women, do not delay and postpone this wonderful fruition. Wisdom demands timely action! So rise up from here as dedicated *sadhakas*, eager to enter *stita-prajnata* and become *stita-dhees*, and finally reach the *Braahmee-stiti*. I wish you all well.

The Full Vision Persists

Let me conclude the session with a verse of Sankara, in which he describes the man of such fullness of perception (*samyak-darsana*) :

संपूर्णं जगदेव नन्दनवनं सर्वेऽपि कल्पद्रुमाः
गाँगं वारि समस्तवारिनिवहाः पुण्याः समस्ताः क्रियाः।
वाच्चः प्राकृतसंस्कृताः श्रुतिशिरो वाराणसी मेदिनीं
सर्वावस्थितिरस्य वस्तुविषया दृष्टे परब्रह्मणि ॥

Sampoornam jagadeva nandanavanam Sarvepi Kalpadrumah
Gaangam vaari samasthavaari nivahah punyah samastah kriyah
Vaachah praakrita-samskritah Srutisiro Varanasi medhini
Sarva-avastitir-asya vastu-vishaya drishte Parabrahmani.

For one who has perceived Brahman, has realized the Braahmic dimension, the whole world resembles the heavenly gardens; all trees verily become the *kalpa-drumas* (wish-yielding trees); all the collections of water, whatever they may be, equal the Holy Ganges; every activity bocomes holy and religious; the uncultured as well as the refined speech stand on a par with Vedanta; the whole of the earth becomes holy like the Benaras. In short, all states of his awareness get equally linked with the Supreme Reality, revealing Atman and Brahman alone.

O. K. Let the talks end now, and let its message 'live' in your hearts and minds.

हरि ॐ तत् सत् ।

End of the Fifth Day's Talk.

ERRATA

Page No.	Line	For	Read
Inside of jacket	3	indugence	indulgence
9	25	consiousness	consciousness
11	14	evisaged	envisaged
18	10	Krishnam	Krishna
24	2	of	off
26	3	after 'doubtful'	add 'about'
40	5	Wher	Where
40	21	homogenity	homogeneity
42	Footnote	'Those......points'	add "now reissued as one combined volume 'Brahma Vidya Abhyasa'
79	14	helpless	helplessness
89	12	henous	heinous
93	20	potentials	potential
95	7	degrce	degree
98	1	en mass	*en masse*
99	22	aflirms	affirms
102	11	resillience	resilience
103	5	extremeties	extremities
103	7	rarified	rarefied
108	10	Artic	Arctic
109	14	nisprihah	*nisprihaha*
113	24	medhini	*medinee*
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